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**A View From Information Processing Perspective: The Determinants  
and Consequences of Cognitive Engagement in Policy Judgments**

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**A View From Information Processing Perspective: The Determinants  
and Consequences of Cognitive Engagement in Policy Judgments**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

For my parent, who kept me going  
For Sung-A, who devoted her entire being to me

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# **A View From Information Processing Perspective: The Determinants and Consequences of Cognitive Engagement in Policy Judgments**

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This research analyzed the quantity and nature of new information citizens acquire and process to formulate their policy judgments. I investigated the factors that drive variability in individuals' cognitive efforts in seeking and processing the relevant information available from the environment and the impacts of the variability on policy judgments.

I asked three principle questions about the formation of policy preferences, focusing on information acquisition: first, which persons expend more time and effort to find and acquire political information; second, what type of information finds its way into policy judgments; and lastly, how this information acquisition affects policy judgments.

Drawing on the information processing perspective, I begin with a postulation that citizens are neither predisposition-driven nor information-driven in making their policy judgments. Rather, they are continually compelled by the interaction between priors (i.e.,

predispositions or preexisting values, beliefs, and attitudes) and external stimuli (i.e., new information available from the environment) in making their policy judgments.

My analyses are based on two primary data sources: one is a large-scale survey data from National Election Studies (NES); another one is an original data from my own experiment. Taking online information processing method along with online polling, I created a unique data set in which the complete information search process is tracked and recorded. I tested two sets of hypotheses. The first set of hypotheses deals with the determinants of information acquisition. The second set of hypotheses is about the consequences of information acquisition.

The evidence provided here shows that (1) many individuals are able and willing to engage in active information seeking to warrant a deeper understanding of the issue at hand; (2) partisan information is not always preferred over factual information; (3) policy judgments about affirmative action are significantly influenced by the extent to which an individual uses incoming, relevant information; (4) different levels of cognitive engagement interact with the different types of information to make a difference in policy judgments about affirmative action.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### PERSPECTIVE, SCOPE, AND STRATEGY OF RESEARCH

This research analyzes the quantity and nature of new information citizens acquire and process to formulate their policy judgments. By investigating the factors that drive variability in individuals' cognitive efforts in seeking and processing the relevant information available from the environment and the effects of the variability on policy judgments, my research reveals the dynamics of citizens' policy preference formation. Specifically, this study examines three principle questions about the formation of policy preferences: which persons expend more time and effort to find and acquire political information, what type of information finds its way into policy judgments, and lastly, how this information acquisition affects policy judgments.

Scholars have long studied the formation of public opinions, focusing on the role of *a priori* political predispositions, such as values, beliefs, and attitudes (Peffley and Hurwitz 1985, 1987, 1998; Feldman 1988; Miller and Shanks 1996; Zaller 1992; for a comprehensive review, see also Kuklinski 2002; Krosnick 2002; Tetlock 2000). Less studied is how new information works and plays with political predispositions in the formation of policy preferences (see Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1996; Feldman 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Lodge and McGraw 1995). Scholars have assumed that citizens use little relevant information from the environment and that, if some information is needed for specific judgments, they, rather than commit energy and time in

information acquisition, rely on political heuristics, information shortcuts, or political cues to make political judgments.<sup>1</sup> However, as Kuklinski and Hurley (1994) contend, minimal use of information and prevalent use of political heuristics are assumed but not empirically demonstrated. How empirically compelling is the case for this minimal use of information assumption? Has this scholarly emphasis on citizens' reliance on heuristics had been empirically grounded?

I contend that the scholarly attention to low-information decision making and political heuristics has obscured understanding the extent to which individuals acquire and process new information, and the way they do so, to make political judgments. It appears that the burden of proof has been imposed on demonstrating that citizens use more than minimal information rather than on the low-information assumption. In this regard, investigating citizens' information acquisition is a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of opinion formation. Indeed, little scholarly effort has challenged the implicit notion of minimal use of the information (see Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b) and prevalent use of political heuristics (Kuklinski and Hurley 1994). Or, to put it differently, many political science models of the opinion formation assume the acquisition of information, but none specify how variations in information

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<sup>1</sup> By political heuristics, information shortcuts, and political cues, I refer to the information that contains partisan frames communicated by political parties, politicians, interest groups, and public opinion polls. Information shortcuts and political cues are sort of heuristics, by which one makes judgmental tasks simpler. There are many kinds of "political" heuristics. Lau and Redlawsk (2001) present five common cognitive heuristics in politics, which include the partisan heuristic, ideology heuristic, endorsement heuristic, viability heuristic (polls), and candidate appearance heuristic. All political heuristics except the last one are based on partisan cues.

acquisition might well be responsible for policy judgments. Analyzing how citizens actually seek and acquire new information allows questioning the theoretical assumption of citizens' minimal information use, converting a supposition into an empirical question.

Using the data derived from two primary sources—a large-scale survey of National Election Studies (NES) and an original experiment, I address a question that has been seldom confronted: what policy judgments citizens will make if they are given opportunities to seek out and process the relevant information. Drawing on an information processing perspective (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993), I begin with a postulation that citizens are neither predisposition-driven nor information-driven in making their policy judgments. Rather, they are continually compelled by the interaction between priors (i.e., predispositions or preexisting values, beliefs, and attitudes) and external stimuli (i.e., new information available from the environment) in making their policy judgments (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chaiken 1980; Ratneshwar and Chaiken 1991; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty and Wegener 1999). By taking process-tracing technique (see Ford et al. 1989; Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 2001a), this research seeks to empirically demonstrate that: (1) individuals vary in their cognitive attention to incoming, relevant information; (2) individuals' preferences vary about the kind of information they rely upon to make policy judgments; (3) variation in cognitive engagement with new information results in differences in policy judgments, meaning those who are highly cognitively engaged in information seeking and processing reach a policy

understanding that differs from the less cognitively engaged; and (4) acquiring different kinds of information results in differences in policy judgments. Those who prefer factual information reach a policy understanding that differs from that of those who prefer partisan information.<sup>2</sup>

### **MINIMAL USE OF NEW INFORMATION**

As Robert Dahl (1961) famously asserts, “Politics is a sideshow in the great circus of life” (305). Most ordinary citizens typically do not reason about incoming political information by weighting it in a rational manner (Simon 1982, 1985; Kinder 1983; Zaller 1992; Converse 1964). When ordinary citizens feel it necessary to acquire relevant information to make political judgments, they follow the “least-effort principle” (Allport 1954; see Lodge and Taber 2001), taking cues or information shortcuts from political parties, politicians, interest groups, or polling results (Lau and Redlawsk 2001a; Page and Shapiro 1992; Mondak 1993; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Zaller 1992; Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Kingdon 1984; also see Downs 1957; Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Fiske and Taylor 1984, 1991).

To say that many citizens are not willing to acquire new information is unexceptional, yet addressing the question of comparing information misers vis-à-vis those who do seek and use new information has been uncommon. To assert that many citizens prefer heuristics-based information sounds plausible, yet to

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term “partisan information” to refer to cues, information shortcuts, and heuristics that produce reductions in citizens’ cognitive efforts to make sense of politics. In politics the first and



identify the extent to which individuals rely on heuristics-based information among other kinds of information requires empirical validation. A harder task is thus to demonstrate the extent to which and the way that an individual actually uses new information to make policy judgments.

Another question to be addressed is why be concerned if citizens would not pay attention to incoming information and if they rely on political cues. One answer may be that expending no cognitive effort to engage in seeking and processing relevant information, depending only on partisan information, facilitates less competent<sup>3</sup> political judgments rather than reason-centered, informed judgments (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chaiken and Trope 1999; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Petty and Wegener 1999). On the other hand, another answer posits that citizens who are badly informed about politics can use a few political cues and heuristics to overcome their chronic lack of relevant information and still make a reasoned choice (Lupia 1994, 2000; Popkin 1991; Page and Shapiro 1992; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; McKelvey and Ordeshook 1986; Sniderman et al. 1991).

The variability in the use of new information across citizens represents the core of the disagreements permeating the debate. I believe that the answers here are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Rather than consider information acquisition and political cue usage as either zero or full, I believe that questions

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perhaps most important cues, information shortcuts, and heuristics are related to partisan schema, which is distinct from objective, factual information.

<sup>3</sup> There are different conceptualizations and measures of competent political judgments. I discuss these terms in detail in Chapter 6. Briefly, by competent political judgment, I refer to the political judgments made by relatively knowledgeable individuals.

should be expressed to measure a fuller range of possibilities. We need to pose the questions, “to what extent do individuals care to know about issues by acquiring and processing available new information,” and, “to what extent do individuals prefer political cues or partisan information to factual, objective type of information.” Addressing these questions requires a theoretical perspective that guides us toward exploring individuals’ use of external stimuli (i.e., the information available from the environment).

### **INFORMATION PROCESSING PERSPECTIVE**

Social psychologists have focused on information processing as a central theme in studying opinion formation and change (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chaiken and Trope 1999; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Fazio and Williams 1986; Dunton and Fazio 1997; Levine, Thomsen, and Gonzales 1997; Jude, Drake, Downing, and Krosnick 1991; Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1996). The information processing perspective has provided an invaluable insight by which scholars explore the mental mechanisms underlying a wide variety of social and political judgments and human decision-making. Indeed, the information processing perspective is sufficiently comprehensive to account for a full range of ramifications and variations in opinion formation and change, addressing the questions of “who engages in which sort of cognitive processing under what conditions and what differences that makes to coding, retention, attitude change, and other cognitive variables with implications for mass politics” (Luskin 2002, 238).

The information processing perspective postulates that (1) individuals are not just passive receptors of new information, but can be active information seekers, interpreting information, making inferences, and choosing suboptimal policy options, and that (2) opinion formation and change are not just a derivative from the priors but complex outcomes mediated by the way that relevant information is sought and processed. What determines opinion formation and change are not only one's priors, but also how one's priors are translated into policy judgments and which sort of information processing is adopted in this translation (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Uleman 1987; McGraw 2003; Fiske 1986; Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Lodge and Taber 2004).

### Dual-Process Models

Information processing perspective rests on the notion that ordinary citizens are flexible information processors, capable of engaging in either theory-driven or data-driven, stereotypic or individuating, peripheral or systematic, and effortless or effortful information processing. Various dual-process models have been identified: offhand versus serious information processing, automatic versus controlled (Devine 1989), category-based versus piecemeal (Fiske and Pavelchak 1986), heuristics versus systematic (Chaiken 1980; Petty Cacioppo 1981), categorized versus individuating (Brewer 1988; Fiske and Neuberg 1990), effortless versus effortful (Tyler et al. 1979), peripheral versus central (Eagly and Chaiken 1993), and mindless versus mindful (Langer, Blank, and Chanowitz 1978).

These paired sets of information processing reflect the common tension between the “drives for accuracy” and the “desire for belief perseverance” when individuals are being exposed to new information and making policy judgments (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fiske and Taylor 1984). Individuals who have the drives for accuracy in their judgmental tasks are likely to take the path of serious, controlled, piecemeal, systematic, individuating, effortful, central, rational, and mindful mode of information processing. In contrast, individuals who are motivated to preserve their own preexisting beliefs and values tend to take the path of offhand, automatic, category-based, heuristics, categorized, effortless, and mindless mode of information processing.

For instance, individuals may act as “lay scientists,” attempting a thorough search and evenhanded evaluation of the evidence, investing considerable effort in examining information specific to a situation to make judgments. By taking the more costly and time-consuming route of gathering individuating pieces of information rather than relying on heuristics, stereotypes, and habitual schemas about the target object, lay scientists want to avoid stereotypic, unconscious, or habitual responses. In contrast, individuals may act as “amateur lawyers,” who selectively seek out information to justify a specific, pre-selected conclusion, relying on and persevering their own beliefs and attitudes. Amateur lawyers are thus unwilling to expend much effort in processing information in a balanced way and likely rely on simple heuristics, stereotypes, and habitual schemas to which they have been used (Chaiken 1980, 1987; Chen and Chaiken 1999; Chaiken and Trope 1999; Petty and Cacioppo 1986).

Dual-process models propose a synthesis about how new information becomes processed and thereby explain the effects of different modes of information seeking and processing on judgments. More precisely, dual-process models propose that the variation in cognitive engagement with political issues is determined by the implications the issues have on one's personal interests, core values, or to associated social groups. If cognitive engagement is sufficiently aroused, one should be motivated to seek and process information in systematic, controlled, effortful, and mindful ways in order to produce the most valid and least biased judgments. In contrast, if cognitive engagement is not sufficiently aroused, one likely seeks and processes information in heuristic, automatic, effortless, and mindless ways and is prone to produce stereotypic and less reasoned judgments (Chaiken and Trope 1999). This distinction implies that the different modes of information processing lead individuals who share predispositions to reach different judgments, depending upon their cognitive engagement with incoming, relevant information.

#### Automatic and Controlled Processes

Of late, social psychologists have focused a great deal on the strength and pervasive influence of automatic information processing in social life (Bargh 1994, 1997, 1999; Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996; Bargh and Ferguson 2000; Chartrand and Bargh 1999; Greenwald and Banaji 1995; Gardner and Cacioppo 1997; Banaji and Greenwald 1994; Dovidio et al. 1997). According to the thesis of "automaticity," individuals are "cognitive monsters" (Bargh 1984). That is,

individuals are so adept at effortless and mindless information processing that much of their social and policy judgments are made automatically. In this view, making judgments is largely an automatic process devoid of conscious processing of relevant information. This view suggests that individuals' predispositions, traits, and stereotypes, imbedded in one's minds and unconsciously and automatically activated by a little stimuli, play a significant role in determining policy judgments.

By the same token, social psychologists have become more concerned with cognitive control (see Cohen, Dunbar, and McClelland 1990; Miller and Cohen 2001; Monsell and Driver 2000; Pashler, Johnston, and Ruthruff 2001). Individuals are not just doomed to be cognitive monsters, but can be flexible processors. Studies show that some individuals under certain conditions are motivated to control or censor the automatic processes in judgmental tasks (Dovidio et al. 1997; Devine 1989; Devine and Monteith 1993; Fazio and Dunton 1997). Studies suggest that it is quite possible for individuals to be conscious about or attentive to their thought processes. Fiske (1989) argues that an individual can make the hard choice and overcome stereotypic influences on judgments if sufficiently motivated to do so. Mendelberg (2001) suggests that "all whites know the content of racial stereotypes and thus all whites are susceptible to racial priming, but some are more powerfully motivated to control it while others are less so" (123-24, emphasis added). In somewhat similar vein, Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) conclude that "when citizens are *aware of the racial*

*cues* in a particular message, they seem to *suppress racial thinking*” (88, emphasis added).

The question is therefore empirical: do individuals guard against or yield to the impact of automatically activated personal trait and social stereotypes when they make political judgments? To address this critical question, it is necessary to examine how individuals process relevant information, through which either automatic or controlled information processing finds its way into policy judgments.

### **SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

I apply dual-process models and the theories of automatic and controlled processes to white citizens’ judgments on public policy questions pertaining to race, particularly affirmative action programs. I provide an empirically grounded account of white Americans’ policy judgments on race issues, focusing on the cognitive processes through which new information interplays with racial considerations.

Using issues and policies relating to race in my analysis is not arbitrary. A reason why I take race as the central issue in my analysis is that as Dawson (2000) claims, “racial considerations remain critical for shaping Americans’ attitudes and policy preferences” (Dawson 2000, 344) while politics and ideologies matter as well. Indeed, many white Americans tend to understand contemporary politics in racial terms, both explicitly and at a more subtle, symbolic level (Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay and Hough 1976; Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and

McConahay 1973; see also Mendelberg 2001; Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002).<sup>4</sup> The association of many policies (e.g., crime, capital punishment, welfare, spending on the poor, food stamps, family values, child care, gay rights, and immigration) with race—both in political discourse and in public opinion and among white Americans as well as black Americans—is pervasive (Winter 2006; Federico 2004; Glaser 2002; Kinder and Winter 2001; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Gilens 1995, 1999, 2001; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley and Hurwitz 2002; Hurwitz, Peffley, and Sniderman 1997; for a review of the electoral connection of race, see Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 2000; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Edsall and Edsall 1992; Frymer 1999). Accordingly, understanding how racial considerations operate among white Americans is critical to explain policy judgments of white Americans on a host of policy issues. The racial attitudes literature, which is ample and in many respects illuminating, helps in this regard. But while it has focused on the attitudes (e.g., racial prejudice<sup>5</sup> and resentment<sup>6</sup>) and stereotypes<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In addition, the racial divide is substantial in American public opinion even on nonracial policies, such as general government spending on social services, education, and assistance for the poor (Tate 1993; Dawson 1994; Smith and Seltzer 2000; Kinder and Winter 2001) and on values, such as egalitarianism, the optimal size of government, and the general fairness of the American political system (Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Kinder and Winter 2001).

<sup>5</sup> By racial prejudice I refer to the attribution of a strong, openly expressed, negative evaluation of African Americans as a group and individuals (see Kinder and Sears 1981; McConahay and Hough 1976; Sears and Kinder 1971; Sears and McConahay 1973). Racial prejudice is now more likely to surface as racial resentment over what many whites see as special government treatment of blacks who do not deserve it.

<sup>6</sup> According to Kinder and Sanders (1996), racial resentment refers to the juncture of anti-black attitudes and traditional American values. The typical argument is that white opposition to race-based policies derives from anti-black affect and the belief that blacks have received unearned advantages in the post-Civil Rights era (see Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Racial stereotypes are not just a heuristic device to simplify experience, but destructive forces that historically have evoked punitive and discriminatory responses to racial groups. A substantial



that tend to follow, it has not focused specifically on the cognitive processes through which racial considerations are transformed into policy judgments, working with the information available from the environment. What cognitive processes make racial considerations play such an important role in opinion formation? How would racial considerations function if individuals were given opportunities to seek out the relevant information available from the environment to make policy judgments on race matters? What do dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled processes tell us about the variables and processes that make racial considerations either reinforce or moderate the effect of racial considerations on policy judgments on race matters? In short, given that racial considerations play such an important role on a host of policy issues, we need to know more about the conditions and mental processes in which racial considerations interplay with the political stimuli from the environment in the case of, at first, race issues.

The second reason why race is the central issue in my analysis is its salience in American politics. It is a well-documented fact that ordinary citizens hold relatively strong opinions about race matters (see Schuman et al. 1997; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000), and that they draw on easy decision-making on race matters. To quote Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991),

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minority of white Americans views blacks as a “hostile” and “lazy” underclass of the undeserving poor (see Hurwitz and Peflley 1998; Bobo 1988; Schuman et al. 1988). Stereotypes of blacks as lazy and in violation of core American values thus play a central role in formulations of the new prejudice. With regard to racial stereotypes, it is important to understand how they are triggered. A growing body of work on priming and framing effects finds that racial stereotypes are activated with a mere exposure to racial cues, especially coded language or implicit racial messages with deniability (Edsall and Edsall 1992; Jamieson 1992; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino et al. 2002).

Ordinary people may have trouble putting their ideas together consistently in some domains of politics; indeed, they can fail to form any idea at all, let alone one consistent with their other opinions. *No one, however, supposes that the public is similarly handicapped on issues of race: The average citizen knows what she thinks about increasing government spending to assist blacks, about busing, about affirmative action* (211, emphasis added).

Similarly, according to Carmines and Stimson (1989), race is an easy issue among other policy issues in the sense that

[Race issues] require almost no supporting context of factual knowledge, no impressive reasoning ability, [and] no attention to the nuances of political life. Thus they produce mass response undifferentiated with respect to knowledge, awareness, attentiveness, or interest in politics; none of these is a requisite of response (Carmines and Stimson 1989, 11).

These arguments imply that the association between the stimuli from the political communications (e.g., political message or the relevant information) and the judgmental tasks on race demands little conscious thought. To put it simply, making policy judgments on race matters is not a cognitively demanding task. In this regard, explaining why he takes race issues as a case for his study, Zaller (1992) points out that

If information can affect racial opinions, which appear to be among the most deeply felt of mass opinions (Carmines and Stimson 1982; Converse 1964; Converse and Markus 1979), it can probably affect most other types of opinions as well (13).

Given strong racial attitudes and their impacts on policy judgments on race matters and other race-related policy issues, the argument goes, it is supposed to be redundant for ordinary citizens to gather relevant information and process it in a cognitively systematic and effortful way to make policy judgments. It follows that it is highly probable that most individuals expend little or no time and effort to become more informed on racial issues. But this conclusion would be too hasty as evidence from dual-process models demonstrate.

A considerable body of research finds that variation in cognitive engagement exists and has both direct and intervening effects on policy judgments in a variety of issue domains (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993). In addition, affirmative action programs might not be just a symbolic, emotionally-charged, easy issue, as is often thought (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; see also Hochschild 2001; Edsall and Edsall 1991; Shipler 1976). Evidence shows that ordinary citizens' perceptions of affirmative action programs are constrained not just by race, but also by political and ideological considerations (Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Stoker 1998; Kuklinski et al. 1997; Gilens, Sniderman, and Kuklinski 2000).

The extent to which individuals use stimuli on race policies is, once again, an empirical question. My agenda includes exploring variation in information seeking with regard to race matters and to estimate the impact that cognitive engagement has on policy judgments on race matters, vying against the anti-black attitudes that are known to be a major factor that determines white Americans' policy judgments on race matters.

In a review of the racial attitudes literature, Mendelberg (2005) points out that "[The] literature on racial attitudes started out relatively narrowly and with implications limited to racial policies; but as it developed it began to offer fruitful implications for a variety of themes" (640). Similarly, I believe that research on cognitive engagement with new information in the case of race matters will produce implications that are not limited to racial policies. It will contribute to our

understanding of citizens' judgments on a host of policy issues that are emotionally-charged, hot-button issues like abortion, gay rights, and capital punishment.

## **HYPOTHESES**

I test two sets of hypotheses. The first set of hypotheses deals with the determinants of cognitive engagement with the given information related to affirmative action programs. I expect that individuals' cognitive engagement, measured by the time expended during the exposure to information, will vary according to political attitudes and racial affect toward blacks. The second set of hypotheses is about the consequences of cognitive engagement. The degree to which individuals weigh race in making policy judgments on affirmative action programs will decrease as a function of the extent to which individuals expend time in information seeking and processing and of the kind of information on which they rely.

### Which Persons Expend More Time to Acquire Information?

We have little evidence that demonstrates how individuals acquire and process information while they face the stimuli from the environment. Rather than rely on the low information assumption, I address the question of which persons expend more time and effort to acquire relevant information in terms of the factors, such as party identification, political ideology, general political knowledge, race-specific knowledge, political interest, and racial affect. To

account for variation in time expended in information seeking and processing, I hypothesize

*H<sub>1</sub>: Individuals with strong partisan and ideological motivation will expend more time in seeking and processing the given information;*

*H<sub>2</sub>: Individuals with a great deal of stored knowledge about general political matters and race-specific matters will expend more time in seeking and processing the given information; and*

*H<sub>3</sub>: Individuals with higher levels of political interest will expend more time in seeking and processing the given information.*

To explain what kind of information citizens favor, I hypothesize that when individuals are exposed to both of partisan and factual information,

*H<sub>4</sub>: Individuals will prefer partisan information to factual information;*

*H<sub>5</sub>: Individuals with strong partisan and ideological motivation will prefer partisan information to factual information; and*

*H<sub>6</sub>: Individuals with higher levels of political knowledge and political interest will prefer partisan information to factual information.*

#### What Are the Consequences of High and Low Levels of Information Seeking?

Different levels of cognitive engagement with new information, I also argue, are not without consequence. The variability in use of new information is in part a consequence of the political and racial predispositions<sup>8</sup> and is central to

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<sup>8</sup> By racial predispositions, I refer to white citizens' attitudes toward blacks that include racial resentment, racial prejudice, and racial stereotype. The concepts of racial resentment, prejudice, and stereotype are typically viewed as being interrelated although the precise relationships among them are complicated. For instance, it is unclear whether racial resentment derives from racial prejudice or ideological principles. In addition, racial resentment means different things to white liberals and conservatives (Feldman and Huddy 2005). Some scholars hold that a racial stereotype is the cognitive component of racial prejudice (Harding, Proshansky, Kutner, and Chein 1969; Secord and Backman 1974) while others suggest that racial stereotype is functional for the individual allowing rationalization of his or her racial prejudice (Allport 1954; LaViolette and Silvert 1951; Saenger 1953; Simpson and Yinger 1965). On the other hand, it seems clear that while most white Americans are not bigots, many of them hold racially predisposed attitudes that

understanding policy judgments. Policy judgments on racial issues depend not only on political and racial predispositions but also on the extent to which individuals use new information. Information processing has several consequences, three of which I shall explore. First, in accounting for how varied levels of information seeking affect policy judgments on affirmative action programs, I hypothesize

*H<sub>7</sub>: Individuals who expend more time in information seeking and processing will be more likely to view affirmative action programs in liberal ways.*

Second, in explaining the effects of the partisan and the factual information, I hypothesize

*H<sub>8</sub>: Individuals who seek and process the factual information will be more likely than individuals who seek and process the partisan information to view affirmative action programs in liberal ways.*

Third, there will be a joint effect of information search and type of information. I hypothesize

*H<sub>9</sub>: Individuals who expend much time in seeking and processing the factual information will be more likely than others to view affirmative action programs in liberal ways.*

## **RESEARCH STRATEGY**

To test these hypotheses, I undertake three separate empirical analyses—one that addresses the determinants of information processing and two that investigate the effects of information processing on policy judgments. The data for my project are derived from two sources: a cross-sectional survey data from

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are early-learned and cognitively simple (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Kinder and Sears 1981; Sears 1988; Katz and Hass 1988; see also Rogers and Prentice-Dunn 1981; Gaertner and Dovidio

the 1996 and the 2004 National Election Studies (NES) and an original online experiment. It is worth noting that my data from the experiment is one of a few that estimate individuals' acquisition of new information while they are making policy judgments (see Lau 1995, Redlawsk 2004; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a).

First, using the 1996 and 2004 NES,<sup>9</sup> I analyzed how cognitive engagement with judgmental tasks in the survey processes moderates the impact of anti-black attitudes on public opinions about race-targeted public policies. Evidence from the NES survey data indicates that effects of cognitive engagement with judgmental tasks among the general population on policy judgments on race matters are significant, holding other relevant variables constant. More precisely, those with high levels of cognitive engagement with race issues broached during the survey interview processes are significantly less likely to be influenced by their anti-black attitudes when they produce political judgments on the race-related policy issues.

In another respect, however, the results from survey data analysis are rather implicational in studying information processing through which individuals make policy judgment. That is, survey respondents normally express public opinion as it is—affected neither by information nor reflection. The survey instrument does not capture variables that reflect how individuals use new information available from the environment to make policy judgments. Although

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1986).

<sup>9</sup> These two data sets contain all variables that are necessary for the analysis, but others do not. I will back to this topic in Chapter 3 in which the two data sets are analyzed.

my measure of cognitive engagement in the survey context is a proxy but not a direct one of how individuals use new information, this study provides empirical evidence that supports my arguments.

Second, to confirm and extend the findings from the cross-sectional data, I investigate the effect of information processing with an experiment crafted specifically to measure the amount of time respondents use in seeking and processing information. To explore and demonstrate how differences in the extent and manner of information seeking and processing are affected by individual predispositions and, in turn, determine policy judgments on affirmative action programs, I created a unique data set in which the complete information search process is tracked and recorded. Taking online information processing method along with online polling, data were collected on the type of information and the duration of information acquisition for each respondent. By analyzing this data, I further substantiated the roles that cognitive engagement plays in making policy judgments on race matters. In contrast to the much existing research, I find information processing to be more prominent than conventionally thought, as well as consequential to policy judgments.

## **DESIGNING EXPERIMENT**

The two experiments investigated the determinants of variability in individuals' cognitive engagement with the given information and its consequences on policy judgments on race matters, respectively. The experiments were designed to observe and record participants' activities as they accessed and



acquired the given information and account for the causes and effects of information processing on policy judgments on affirmative action programs. The subjects' activities in information seeking and processing were monitored and recorded by computer programs in terms of what information they accessed and how long they sifted through information. Below I describe the specific parameters and attributes of experiments. See Table 1.1 for a tabular summary of the experiment.

### Subjects

Those that participated in the survey included 1,065 undergraduate students, recruited from 17 introductory government classes at the University of Texas at Austin and three introductory government classes at Austin Community College in May, July, and October of 2005. For incentives, subjects received minor extra credit for the participation toward their final grade in the course. My convenience sample is not representative of the nation as a whole, but it does contain reasonable variation along several important attitudinal dimensions making the data suitable for analysis.

### Procedure

The courses' instructors announced the experiments to the class during lecture by giving students the web address where students could participate on their own time using the internet. Students who decided to participate in the experiment accessed the experiment's web site, using their own internet-

connected computers at their convenience. When participants opened up the first page of the experimental site, they were given the general instructions for the experimental tasks.

The experiment consisted of an information session and a survey session. In the survey session, subjects were asked to complete a questionnaire that asked a standard array of political and attitudinal questions. In the information session, subjects were asked to seek information about affirmative action programs by clicking the labels on the computer screen they wanted to probe and scrolling down the web pages. Subjects did not initially see the content of the information. They had to choose certain labels on computer screen by clicking it to read the information. Examples of the information pages that subjects viewed are available in Appendix 4.B.

#### Manipulation of Treatment

I constructed stimulus material, i.e., briefing documents, containing a rich amount of information about affirmative action programs and provided the subjects in the information session. The information provided consisted of two types of information, the partisan information and the factual information. Subjects in control group were presented with both the partisan and the factual information. Subjects in two experimental groups were assigned to either the partisan information or the factual information at random.

## **CHAPTER PLAN**

Chapter 2 sets the stage for the study by discussing dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled processes. Based on dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled processes, I raise a theoretical possibility that individuals actively use incoming, relevant information if they are given the opportunity for information seeking at the minimum cost, and that this affects policy positions of white citizens on race-targeted public policies.

Chapter 3 presents survey data-based evidence of the basic proposition of the dissertation—the effects of cognitive engagement on the formation of racial policy judgments. Cognitive engagement with relevant information associated with policy issue at hand is assumed to benefit the citizens' opinion formation. Nonetheless, the effects of cognitive engagement on racial policy judgments have yet to be fully demonstrated empirically, especially based on the survey data from general population. Using the National Election Studies (NES) data, I demonstrate that cognitive engagement, vying against the dominant role of racial attitudes such as racial resentment and racial stereotypes, moderates the opposition of whites' opinions to racially targeted policies.

Recognizing that the measure of cognitive engagement tapped by a cross-sectional survey instrument reflects only a part of the variable of interest, I extend the analysis in Chapter 3 to an experimental design. In Chapter 4, I present results from an experiment crafted to measure cognitive engagement directly, in terms of the time that individuals expend for information seeking and to estimate the effect

of cognitive engagement on policy judgments. I describe the data collection method and discuss the innovative features of process-tracing method in studying the formation of racial policy judgments. While absolute certainty is elusive in the study of public opinion, I believe that the techniques that I employed achieve a reasonable measure of how citizens process and choose information.

The next two chapters are the highlights of the dissertation. Chapter 5 analyzes the data from Experiment 1, featuring the findings regarding variation in individuals' use of incoming, relevant information. I demonstrate that individuals are not adroit practitioners of information seeking and processing but nor are they hopelessly muddled incompetents. I also demonstrate that individuals do not always rely on simple, easy-to-execute heuristics; rather some expend a fair amount of time and effort on careful examination and analysis of incoming, relevant information.

Chapter 6 analyzes the data from Experiment 2. Here, I document the effects of information processing behavior on racial policy judgments. I demonstrate that policy judgments on affirmative action programs vary, contingent on levels of cognitive engagement with the given information and types of information individuals processed. More precisely, individuals view affirmative action programs in liberal ways to the extent that they sought out and processed the factual information. Importantly, this tendency is clearer among those who expended relatively longer time in seeking and processing information. I argue that racial attitudes are not overwhelming and constant, nor are they far beyond the power of conscious, effortful information seeking and processing.

Chapter 7 wraps up the dissertation with a review and presents the implications of the findings from the substantive chapters. The result of these analyses is a clearer understanding of the role of cognitive engagement with new information. In contrast to the much existing research, I find that a considerable part of racial policy judgments is driven by how incoming, relevant information is sought out and processed, and that Americans' racial policy judgments stem from more than immutable anti-black attitudes. More broadly, findings suggest that a starting point to change white Americans' opposition to affirmative action programs and other race-targeted policies might be to let them be involved in and pay attention to the issue. This may guarantee neither a change in white citizens' global attitudes toward blacks nor an immediate shift of their policy positions on race-targeted policies, but it makes them at least less susceptible to their anti-black attitudes.

**Table 1.1. Summary of Experiments**

	<b>Experiment 1</b>	<b>Experiment 2</b>
<b>Procedure</b>	Survey followed by Information Seeking	Information Seeking followed by Survey
<b>Briefing Documents</b>	Partisan and Factual Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group 1: Partisan Information</li> <li>• Group 2: Factual Information</li> <li>• Group 3: No Information</li> </ul>
<b>Dependent Measure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time expended in seconds in seeking information; and</li> <li>• Preferred type of information accessed</li> </ul>	Policy judgments on Affirmative Action programs
<b>Explanatory Variables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political predispositions, such as party identification, political ideology, political knowledge, and political interests</li> <li>• Race related attitudes such as affective attitudes about blacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time expended in seconds in seeking information; and</li> <li>• Preferred type of information accessed</li> </ul>
<b>Hypotheses</b>	Variations in information search in terms of search time and preferred type of information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by political predispositions; and</li> <li>• by race-related attitudes</li> </ul>	Information effects on policy judgments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by different types of information; and</li> <li>• by information with reference to no information</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORIES OF INFORMATION PROCESSING, COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT, AND POLICY JUDGMENTS ON RACE

An extensive body of research has examined the question of how individuals make political judgments (Simon 1985; Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Fiske and Taylor 1991; Lodge and McGraw 1995; Zaller and Feldman 1992; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b). Great progress has been made in our understanding of the mental mechanisms and processes that underlie individuals' formulation of political judgments. Three major arguments regarding opinion formation stand out. First, individuals typically do not reason about their political judgments in a rational and calculating manner (Converse 1964; Kinder 1983).<sup>10</sup> Second, many individuals lack not only relevant political knowledge but also the motivation and ability to thoroughly consider new information (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991; Zaller 1992; Gerber and Green 1998, 1999; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Carmines and Stimson 1989). Third, many individuals almost always rely on simple, easy-to-execute decision rules, rather than spending the time and effort to examine and acquire "encyclopedic" information (Simon 1985; Lupia 1994, 2000; Lupia, McCubbins, and Popkin 2001).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> It is known that most individuals tend to be "muddled incompetents," instead of "adroit practitioners" of information processing, anchoring their political judgments on preexisting beliefs, values, and attitudes.

<sup>11</sup> By encyclopedic information, I follow the term by Lupia (1994), referring to objective, factual information.

I do not dispute the importance and validity of these arguments. Rather, I contend that the scholarly obsession with the nature of opinion formation has underestimated another aspect of opinion formation: individuals' use of new information available from the environment. Along the lines of my argument, an increasing number of studies in social and political psychology have attempted to take a closer look at the role of new information when individuals make political judgments. These studies find that the extent to which individuals acquire and process new information, and the way they do so, make a substantial difference in political judgments (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Singer 2002; Goyder 1987; Bargh 1994, 1997; see Lodge and McGraw 1995; Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 2001b; Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001). The underlying assumption of this approach is that some individuals are responsive to information available in the environment, and that, for those who are, political judgments will be driven not only by preexisting values, beliefs, and attitudes (i.e., priors or predispositions), but also by the extent and manner of information acquisition (Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b; see also Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Higgins and Bargh 1987). Some individuals, under certain conditions, are more likely to process and acquire the new information, and thereby are likely improve their understanding of the issues, hold more considered understandings, and justify their policy judgments with a better reasoning (e.g., Page 1996; Mansbridge 1983; Fishkin 1992, 1995; Iyengar, Luskin, and Fishkin 2003; Druckman 2004).



This does not mean prior attitudes play an insignificant role in policy judgments. Rather, taking the extent and mode of information acquisition and processing into account yields a more precise understanding of the nature of opinion formation. In other words, it is critical that scholars take a more comprehensive account of the roles that mental constructs (i.e., predispositional factors) and procedural factors (i.e., information processing) play together in producing individuals' political judgments. Doing so will improve our understanding of how individuals make political judgments. As Taber, Lodge, and Glathar (2001) contend, "We have focused too heavily on the content and structure of beliefs and have paid too little attention to cognitive process" (198). In other words, we have exclusively focused on "chronically accessible political constructs" (e.g., political predispositions or schemas, such as party identification, political ideology, belief systems, and knowledge structures like political awareness, sophistication, and political ideology in Conversion terms). And the way that the new information is actually gathered and transformed into political judgments has been relatively neglected.

In this chapter I provide a theoretical framework for better understanding individuals' policy judgments, putting emphasis on the concept of cognitive engagement, a critical determinant of the mental operations when policy judgments are produced. On this account, I contend that the effects of predispositions on policy judgments will be either moderated or reinforced to the extent, and by the way, that individuals utilize new information in making policy judgments.

I begin by discussing on-line (OL) and memory-based (MB) processes of political judgments. Next, I discuss an information processing perspective, focusing on dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled process, both of which have been at the center of research in social psychology to examine social judgments. In this discussion I highlight critical functions of cognitive engagement as a determinant of political judgments. I then review previous work on cognitive engagement in political science. Next, I address the issue of how policy judgments about race issues can be better explained by an information processing perspective. Finally, I present arguments that the consequences of different levels of cognitive engagement with incoming information and of different types of information that individuals process are significant influences on policy judgments on matters concerning race.

### **ON-LINE VERSUS MEMORY-BASED PROCESS: THE ROLE OF INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Studies on political judgments can be sorted into two broad categories: those concerned with the structure and mental representation of political objects, such as candidates or issues and those concerned with the dynamics and mechanisms of cognitive processes underlying political judgments (Lodge 1995; Lau 1995; Lodge and Taber 2001; Wyer and Ottati 1993).

On the one hand, research on chronically accessible political constructs (e.g., belief system, attitude, and stereotype) is concerned with estimating their consistent and reliable effects on political judgments and behavior (Campbell et al. 1964; Krosnick 1983; Kinder 1983; Kinder and Sears 1985). And research on

political memory (e.g., political sophistication, awareness, and knowledge) has been concerned with measuring with precision the structure of the information stored in memory and examining the consequences of knowledge structures for subsequent inferences and judgments (Converse 1964; Luskin 1989; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). According to these studies, new information is encountered, and some of it is stored in long-term memory. When a judgment is needed, individuals search long-term memory for information and use the retrieved information to make a judgment.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, scholars, taking a closer look at the dynamics of cognitive processes, posit that political judgments and decision-making are formed on-line, in which new information plays a significant role. The information processing approach is concerned with identifying the processes by which individuals use new information to form political judgments. The way in which new information is acquired and processed is the fundamental building block in this approach. According to Lodge and colleagues, individuals integrate the evaluative implications of new information by continuously updating an “on-line running tally” when new information is encountered (Lodge and McGraw

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<sup>12</sup> In the process of computing judgments, the accessibility of a concept in memory is determined in part by the frequency with which the concept has been used in the past. Life goals, values, and past experiences can influence the frequency with which certain concepts have been used and thus can produce differences in the chronic accessibility of these concepts. Also, events that one experiences a short time before information is received also can activate concepts that are used to interpret this information and, as a result, can influence judgments of the object to which the information refers (Wyer and Srull 1989; Zaller 1992). Another determinant of the concepts a person is likely to bring to bear on information is the already acquired knowledge about the person or object to which the information pertains or, alternatively, about a group or category to which the target belongs.

1995; Lodge and Taber 2001; Taber, Lodge, and Glathar 2001; Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b).

Whether an individual adopts an on-line or memory-based approach depends on individual and contextual differences. For instance, more sophisticated individuals are more likely to be habitually adept at on-line processing, whereas unsophisticated individuals are more likely to rely on memory-based strategies (McGraw, Lodge, and Stroh 1990). And opinions about the issues that are of great importance to an individual are formed on-line, whereas the issues that are unimportant are more likely to produce memory-based opinions (McGraw, Lodge, and Stroh 1990). As another example, contextual parameters, such as information structure and task complexity, are also considered important regulating conditions for individuals to take on-line or memory-based process to make political judgments (Lau and Redlawsk 2001a). More precisely, memory plays an important role in making a decision when judgmental tasks are complex and information is given in an uncontrolled way; otherwise, the on-line information search is responsible for decision-making.

One of the questions that the two approaches address is about the role of new information in making policy judgments. That is, how much of what kind of new information will enter into the decision calculus? How will individuals look at all, some, little, or none of the available information, and, if attended to, how does this heeded information produce judgments and choice? I turn now to discussing these questions within the framework of dual-process models.

## **DUAL-PROCESS MODELS**

The idea that there exist two distinct kinds of information processing has been around for as long as philosophers and psychologists have written about the nature of human thought (see Chaiken and Trope 1999). Only in recent years, however, have cognitive scientists proposed the striking and strong claim that there are two quite separate cognitive systems underlying judgments and decision-making (see Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Presently, dual-process theories are ubiquitous. There are dual-process theories of attribution (Trope 1986; Uleman, Newman, and Moskowitz 1996), perception (Brewer 1988; Fiske and Neuberg 1988; Gilbert 1989; Zárate, Sanders, and Garza 2000), stereotyping and prejudice (Devine 1989), persuasion (Chaiken 1980; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Chaiken and Trope 1999; Chaiken and Eagly 1993), mental control (Wegner 1994; Wenzlaff and Wegner 2000), self-regulation (Baumeister and Heatherton 1996; Metcalfe and Mischel 1999; Bargh 1994, 1997), emotion (Teasdale 1999; van Reekum and Scherer 1997), and personality (Epstein 1998).

Despite diverse versions and focuses of dual-process models, dual-process models posit in common that: (1) when individuals are sufficiently motivated and have enough cognitive resources available, they engage in conscious, elaborated, and effortful information seeking and processing; (2) individuals' different levels of cognitive engagement with the incoming information make a difference in policy judgments; and, more precisely, (3) as cognitive engagement with the incoming information increases, its relative influence on policy judgments

becomes stronger. Individuals who have their own motivation for correct or optimal judgments are likely to take their judgmental tasks more seriously, invest more effort, and bear more of the responsibility of decision-making (Petty and Cacioppo 1986, 1990; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chaiken and Trope 1999; see Kuklinski et al. 2001). Among other dual-process models, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) have become increasingly popular with researchers over the past decade. Here I briefly present these two models.

In HSM, heuristic processing is said to involve use of simple, well-learned, and readily accessible decision rules like “experts are always right,” “the majority is correct,” or “statistics don’t lie.” Heuristic processing is the default processing mode; individuals will use decision shortcuts unless special circumstances intervene. Individuals will perform systematic processing when circumstances (1) make them feel an unusually great need to be accurate, defend an attitude, or create a positive impression; and (2) offer enough time and cognitive capacity to permit more effortful processing. This processing involves the active, effortful scrutiny of all relevant information and therefore demands considerable cognitive capacity (Chaiken et al., 1989; Chen and Chaiken 1999).

Similarly, in ELM (Petty and Cacioppo 1981, 1986), elaboration likelihood is the extent to which the impact of a persuasive message is caused by the arguments contained in the message (high elaboration) versus peripheral aspects of the message (i.e., message source and the persuasion situation) (low elaboration). As in the heuristic-systematic processing model, it is assumed that

when people are low in ability or motivation, they will not engage in high elaboration. Then, judgments will be based mostly on highly salient peripheral cues. When people possess both capacity and motivation, they perform a detailed analysis of the message. They consider argument strength as well as grasp an opportunity to correct for effects of any potentially biasing peripheral cues (Petty and Cacioppo 1981, 1986; Petty and Wegener 1999).

In short, dual-process models assume that individuals have the cognitive flexibility of choosing either path of high or low elaboration and/or heuristic or systematic information processing to make political judgments, depending on their motivation and cognitive ability (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993).

## **AUTOMATIC AND CONTROLLED PROCESSES**

Of late, researchers in social cognition have documented that most individuals are unintentional or unconscious in their judgmental tasks, and that much of information processing occurs automatically—that is, spontaneously, unconsciously, uncontrollably, and effortlessly (Bargh 1994, 1997; Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996; Fazio 1986). Certain attitudes become activated automatically by the mere presence of external stimuli and then affect judgments and behaviors (Bargh, Chaiken, Gollwitzer, and Pratto 1992; Bargh, Chaiken, Raymond, and Hymes 1996; Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, and Kardes 1986). Automatic processing involves the unintentional or spontaneous activation of some well-learned set of associations or responses (e.g., racial prejudice and stereotypes) that

have been developed through repeated activation in one's life time. Automatic processing likely occurs when less information is available and information recently accessed is affectively congruent with the priors (Bargh 1994, 1997; Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996).

In contrast, controlled processing is intentional and requires individuals' active attention to the information object. Studies show that the ultimate judgments are mediated by conscious processing of information (Dovidio et al. 1997; Devine 1989; Monteith and Devine 1993; Monteith, Sherman, and Devine 1998; Fazio and Dunton 1997). Devine (1989), for example, argues for a two-stage model of prejudice in which the perceptual phase is automatic (i.e., activation of stereotypes by the target individual's features), whereas the second phase is a matter of conscious choice, driven by one's relevant values. She demonstrates that "controlled process can inhibit the effects of automatic processing when the implications of such processing compete with goals to establish or maintain a nonprejudiced identity" (Devine 1989, 15). And, in situations in which controlled process is precluded or interfered with, automatic processing effects may exert the greatest influence on responses.

At present, there is considerable debate concerning the efficacy of efforts to control stereotype activation and application (see Monteith, Sherman, and Devine 1998). Some research suggests that intentional control over activation and use of stereotypes is possible even if difficult. Other research suggests that efforts at control may backfire, producing unintended heightened activation and use of stereotypes. Taking automatic and controlled processes of information together,



the question is how often, and under what conditions, the automatic process is overridden by the controlled process. Control over automatic activation of preconscious attitudes requires three things: (1) awareness of the influence, or at least the possibility of influence, by preconscious attitudes; (2) motivation to exert the control of it; and (3) enough attentive capacity (or lack of distractions) at the time to engage in processing information (see Bargh 1989; Wegner 1994).

Awareness of the automatic effect is necessary for the motivation to be engaged, and for the motivation to operate to control the automatic impulse it must be supported by sufficient processing capacity. Given that the controlled process requires all three of these features to be in place, it is difficult to see that there are many real-world circumstances in which all three are present. Even with the best of cognitive engagement, one cannot control an influence if one is not aware of its operation, or at least its potential for operating (Devine 1989).

To put it similarly yet simply, Fazio (1990; and Fazio and Dunton 1997) posits that motivation and opportunity to engage in the issues determine whether individuals follow a relatively spontaneous process driven by the influence of automatically activated attitudes or a more deliberative process characterized by effortful and conscious analysis. In the case of race-related judgments, the relevant motivation involves a desire to control seemingly prejudiced reactions and to think and learn about the issue at hand.

To summarize, the distinction between automatic and controlled process basically lies in the extent to which individuals exert cognitive effort to involve in the issue at hand by acquiring and processing the incoming, relevant information.

The more time and effort one expends in acquiring and processing relevant information, the more likely one is to use a controlled process rather than an automatic process.

## **COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT**

A review of dual-process models reveals that cognitive engagement is at the center of information processing perspective. To account for the process by which information is acquired, it is critical to precisely measure cognitive engagement. For this task, I begin this section by distinguishing cognitive engagement, by which I mean “attention” to the issue, from knowledge, which refers to “understanding” of the issue. I contend that typical measures of knowledge do not do a good job of discriminating who in fact acquires information. I also contend that the scholarly focus on citizens’ chronic lack of political knowledge and their reliance on political heuristics have misguided our understanding of the role cognitive engagement plays in the formation of political judgments. Finally, I briefly discuss the measures of cognitive engagement devised by Lau and Redlawsk (1997, 2001a).

### Cognitive Engagement and Knowledge

In political science, Zaller (1992) identifies that cognitive engagement is a principal analytical component in the study of the nature and origins of public opinion. Nevertheless, he adopts another term, “political attentiveness,” as his principal analytical concept. He writes:

Although cognitive engagement is the right specification for my model, it is a cumbersome and somewhat precious phrase. Therefore, I will, through most of the analysis that follows, use a simpler phrase, namely political attentiveness or political awareness. But *cognitive engagement, political attentiveness, and political awareness are meant to convey the same thing* (Zaller 1992, 43, emphasis added).

By political awareness Zaller (1992) refers to “the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered” (21).

Given this definition, in order to measure political awareness, Zaller (1992) uses a battery of the factual questions<sup>13</sup> that reflect one’s basic understanding of political structures, processes, and figures. Therefore, Zaller (1992) assumes at the conceptual level that political awareness refers to both attention and understanding, yet at the operational level, his political awareness reflects understanding but not attention. Acknowledging this, Zaller (1992) notes,

In using this sort of measure, I will be assuming that persons who are knowledgeable about politics in general are habitually attentive to communications on most particular issues as well (43).

However, this assumption awaits corroboration by empirical evidence. We do not have evidence that shows whether politically knowledgeable individuals pay more or less attention to new information available when they make political judgments. Furthermore, paying attention to new information is conceptually distinct from understanding issues based on knowledge. Attention is the assignment of cognitive effort to process incoming information (i.e., external stimuli) from the environment, whereas understanding is the product of both cognitive engagement with issues and preexisting knowledge structured in one’s

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<sup>13</sup> The items include which party controls Congress, the term office of a U.S. senator), ability to evaluate a variety of somewhat obscure political figures (e.g., Henry Jackson), ability to recall the names of Congressional candidates, and ability to locate accurately the policy positions of prominent individuals and groups.

long-term memory. By lumping “attention” with “understanding,” Zaller (1992) leaves the question of how individuals with different levels of knowledge actually acquire and process information from the environment and convert it into political judgments unaddressed.<sup>14</sup>

Let me turn to a discussion about how knowledge becomes to be considered to the same as cognitive engagement. The original impetus for the idea of minimal use of information comes from Downs (1957). According to Kuklinski and Hurley (1994),

Downs first demonstrates the irrationality of investing time, attention, and resources to become politically informed; and he then proceeds to reveal the value, from the citizen’s standpoint, of informational shortcuts, especially the reliance on trusted experts (730).

Subsequent studies of citizens’ decision-making have supported Downs’s speculation, showing that most citizens “know” little about politics (Converse 1964; Sniderman 1993; Luskin 1989; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Then, minimal use of information is premised on the findings of citizens’ chronic lack of political knowledge. The well-documented findings of the American public’s lack of political knowledge are taken as evidence that most citizens do not attend to, or care about, incoming, relevant information from the political environment (see Carmines and Kuklinski 1990; Page and Shapiro 1992; Sniderman, Brody,

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<sup>14</sup> In another study (Price and Zaller 1993), Zaller contends that “general political knowledge” is a better measure for “actual reception” of news than the self-reported measure of “media use” that actually captures “simple exposure” to news. I agree with this argument. But my point here is that even Zaller’s measure of “current news reception” is based on the respondents’ ability to recall basic information about a variety of current news events, but not related to cognitive engagement or attention. Current new reception is measured in the way that respondents who correctly answered the follow-up question about rudimentary elements of the story they said they had heard or read were counted as having actually received a given news story. Thus, general

and Tetlock 1991; Zaller 1992; Mondak 1993; Lupia 1994, 2000; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). In short, the notion of citizens' minimal use of information, which is initially derived from Downs's deductive reasoning and then supported by the second-hand evidence of citizens' lack of knowledge, has become considered to be matter-of-fact.

### Cognitive Engagement and Political Heuristics

Drawing on social psychology literature on "cognitive heuristics" (see Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky 1982; Nisbet and Ross 1980; see also Downs 1957), political scientists have presumed that most individuals rely on information shortcuts or partisan cues to comprehend politics just as they do in their everyday lives.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, political heuristics seem indispensable to any individuals, trying to make political judgments with the least amount of effort. But, what if only a few people use political heuristics? Which persons rely on political heuristics to make political judgments? Do people rely more on political heuristics than other types of information? In order to address these questions, researchers must be able to identify the extent to which heuristics-based information is preferred over other types of information when individuals make political judgments.

Some studies in political science examined how use of cues from political elites and political frames leads to different policy judgments within the theoretical perspectives of framing and priming (see Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley

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political knowledge and current news reception are related to the cognitive ability to recall information, but not cognitive attention to information.

<sup>15</sup> A multitude of "political heuristics" has been identified: party identification (Campbell et al. 1960), candidate traits (Popkin 1991), trusted elites (Mondak 1993), interest groups (Lupia 1994), public mood (Rahn 2000), and ideological labelings (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991).

1997; Valentino 1997; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Nelson 204; Druckman 2004; Kuklinski et al. 2001; Lupia 2000). There has been, however, little empirical research about which types of information people use to make political judgments. In fact, individuals' reliance on heuristics-based information other than other types of information awaits empirical corroboration.

### Measures of Cognitive Engagement

A reason that political scientists have been less concerned about estimating citizens' actual use of different types of information is easy to understand: the data are hard to acquire (see Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b). Lack of relevant method for observing information processing has led scholars to premise, rather than demonstrate, minimal use of information and prevalent use of heuristics. Measuring an individual's acquisition of information is not an easy task because it is a mental activity that cannot be directly observed. In order to measure it, researchers must have a methodology or technique that enables them to track down and record individuals' behaviors of information seeking and processing while they are seeking and processing incoming information.

In attempting to examine decision-making process and its impact on political judgments, Lau (1995) and Lau and Redlawsk (1997, 2001a, 2001b) develop measures of how individuals search information. They estimate information search by three measures—"content of search" (i.e., the specific type of information acquired during search), "sequence of search" (i.e., temporal order in which information is acquired), and "depth of search" (i.e., the amount of

information considered during search / the amount of time spent during search and the priority of accessing different types of information). Depth of search, among others, is closely related to cognitive engagement. The underlying expectation of the measure of depth of search is that the longer the search time (or the more the information considered), the deeper and more comprehensive the information search, while the shorter the search time (or the less the information considered), the shallower or more cursory the information search. My measure of cognitive engagement in this research principally follows Lau and Redlawsk's measure of depth of search. I will discuss in detail this issue in Chapter 4.

## **COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND RACE MATTERS**

Race has been, and is, not only an important social and political issue that has a great deal of implications for American life, but also an excellent case that allows scholars to build and test their theories about the mass public's social and political cognition, perception, and judgments (see Mendelberg 2005). Progress in our understanding in this highly packed sub-field of public opinion study is noticeable (for a review, see Hutchings and Valentino 2004; Mendelberg 2005; Sears, Sidanius, and Bobo 2000). But the progress is centered on certain aspect of the problem: as Sniderman and Carmines (1997) put it, "the problem of race, now as ever, is defined...as a problem in the hearts and minds of white Americans" (5). Major studies on white racial attitudes have been based on the proposition that white citizens rely heavily on anti-black attitudes that are principally affective and negative toward black Americans when they are asked to make policy

judgments on race matters and race-related matters (Winter 2006; Federico 2004; Glaser 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley and Hurwitz 2002; Edsall and Edsall 1991; Gilens 1996, 1998, 1999; Peffley, Shilets, and Williams 1996; Valentino 1999). These attitudes are learned at some earlier point in their life time, and thus immutable (Sears 1986, 1988; Schuman et al. 1997).

It follows that scholarly focus on anti-black attitudes in accounting for the formation of racial policy preferences is likely to under-estimate the role that cognitive elements might play, thus undermining attempts to observe its subsequent effects. Thus, cognitive elements, such as general political knowledge and race-specific knowledge, are considered to matter little in accounting for whites' policy judgments on race issues (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Sears et al. 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sidanius et al. 1997; Federico and Sidanius 2002; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). It is presumed that white citizens are not engaged in seeking new information about race matters, trying to reconcile newly acquire information with their global attitudes toward blacks; rather, they simply base their policy judgments on race matters on their global attitudes toward blacks.

Therefore, as the argument goes, little individual difference in seeking and acquiring new information about race matters among white citizens warrants no impact of cognitive engagement on policy judgments on race matters.

In another respect, evidence shows that white citizens' policy judgments on race matters are fragile (Nelson 2004; Kuklinski and Hurley 1997; Stoker 1998; Hochschild 2000). We do not have any *ex ante* reason or indisputable



evidence that leads us to think that white citizens have exceptionally well-developed true opinions on race issues. Instead, many white citizens are ambivalent about their issue position on race. They are vulnerable to the ways that issues are framed (Entman and Rojecki 2000; Nelson 2004; Druckman 2004; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Kuklinski and Hurley 1997; Stoker 1998) and the ways that racial cues prime anti-black predispositions (Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Huber and Lapinski 2006; Winter 2006). Issue frames can unconsciously associate policies with white citizens' anti-black attitudes, and racial cues can unconsciously activate white citizens' anti-black attitudes. White opinion on many policy issues are easily racialized (Gilens 2001; Winter 2006).

However, the power of racial attitudes varies, depending on the message characteristics. For instance, as Valentino, Hutchings, and White (2002) claim,

stereotype-inconsistent cues may...suppress priming by *making people spend time thinking about how to reconcile the new information with prior beliefs*....when campaigns emphasize policies that have been linked previously to blacks, they boost the impact of racial attitudes on candidate evaluations....when they [campaigns] violate those stereotypes by presenting blacks in a favorable light, or present images of nonstereotyped groups in these negative roles, that impact declines. When citizens are *aware* of the racial cues in a particular message, they seem to suppress racial thinking (88, emphasis added).

Similarly, as Mendelberg (2001) implies, conscious processing of verbal racial cues (i.e., explicit racial cues) allows those viewing an explicit appeal to identify racial content and reject it in favor of widespread egalitarian norms. Thus judgmental tasks on race issues normally demand less conscious thought, but certain messages boost conscious thought when doing judgmental tasks on race issues.

These implications are perfectly compatible with dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled information processing. That is, the power of racial attitudes depends on levels of cognitive engagement with the information available from the environment that drive racial attitudes to be either automatic or controlled. Regarding this, the social psychology literature provides plenty of evidence (Devine 1989; Devine and Monteith 1993; Fazio and Dunton 1997; Wegener and Petty 1995). For instance, individuals for whom racial attitudes are significant are more likely to respond quickly and easily to the race-targeted public policies without expending much cognitive effort to seek and process the relevant information. Individuals for whom race is emotion-evoking are likely to weight race more heavily in judging race-based public policies. In contrast, individuals who are well aware of their racial attitudes are likely to expend relatively more cognitive effort to seek and process the relevant information and thus correct their initial considerations driven by negative racial feelings toward blacks. Individuals motivated to control their seemingly race-based, prejudiced reaction are less likely to use race in judging and expressing their policy judgments (Devine 1989; Monteith, Sherman, and Devine 1998; Fazio and Dunton 1997; Bargh, Chen, and Burrows 1996).

Race may be somewhat idiosyncratic or anomalous in the minds and hearts of white Americans in a sense that anti-black attitudes are a powerful predictor of white opinions on a host of issues. Yet it is still possible for white Americans to apply their global political beliefs or the social norms of racial equality to implanted racial policy issues if they consciously control their anti-

black attitudes. Critical to accounting for white Americans' policy judgments on race matters, as well as other policy matters, is to examine who more or less cognitively involves in the given information about race matters, under what condition.

### **QUESTIONS OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN RACIAL POLICY JUDGMENTS**

Based on the theories and models that I have so far discussed, I examine the following questions. How do individuals vary in their cognitive engagement with new information in the case of race-related policy issues? What causes this variability, if any? How does information seeking and processing affect policy judgments on race matters? What differences in policy judgments are made due to variability in the way and to the extent that individuals seek and process new information? How do the priors interplay with different levels of cognitive engagement?

First, I will demonstrate that individuals do vary in their cognitive engagement in terms of time spent seeking and processing the given information, depending on their motivation and cognitive ability, as dual-process models suggest. With regard to motivation and cognitive ability, we have well-developed measures of “political” motivation and “political” cognitive ability, which is party identification (and political ideology) and political knowledge, respectively. I expect to find that individuals who have partisan and ideological motivation regarding the issue of affirmative action programs and hold relatively well-

organized political knowledge will be likely to take systematic and central information processing, rather than heuristic and peripheral information processing, by expending more time in acquiring and processing the given information to make policy judgments.

Second, I will demonstrate how variability in time spent in information seeking and processing results in different policy judgments on affirmative action programs. As dual-process models and theories of automatic and controlled process suggest, those who are consciously and effortfully engaged in the given information will produce more informed and better reasoned policy judgments on affirmative action programs, through the weighting of the given information and controlling their racial attitudes.

Third, I will demonstrate how different types of information affect policy judgments on affirmative action programs. I expect that individuals who seek and process the factual information will hold policy judgments different from those who seek and process the partisan information. As dual-process models suggest, seeking and processing the factual information likely lead individuals to respond to the “content” of the information, while seeking and processing the partisan information likely induce individuals to pay attention to “sources” of the information. More precisely, those who are aware of sources of the information will be more likely than those who are exposed to contents of the information to make policy judgments that are in line with their political and racial attitudes. This indicates that those who process the partisan information are less likely than

those who process the factual information to be influenced by acquisition of new information.

Fourth, I expect to find that less knowledgeable individuals can emulate the policy judgments of more knowledgeable individuals to the extent that less knowledgeable individuals expend relatively longer time in seeking and processing the given information.

Finally, I will demonstrate that the magnitude of the impact of racial attitudes will be moderated among those who spend more time in seeking and processing the given information. That is, as theories of automatic and controlled processes suggest, the more one cognitively involves in the issue by seeking and processing the given information, the less likely she is to rely on racial attitudes.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### **EVIDENCE FROM SURVEY DATA: THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SELF-CENSORING PROCESS OF RACIAL PREDISPOSITIONS**

Explaining why individuals who are committed to the principle of racial equality continue to oppose race-targeted public policies has been the subject of extensive research and intense debate by scholars over the past quarter-century (see Sears et al. 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sidanius et al. 1997; Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Sniderman and Piazza 1993). There is a general agreement among scholars that making judgments on race-targeted policy issues is marked by a tension between “emotions driven by racial predispositions” and “values and self-concepts best characterized by the principle of racial equality.”

Three points of agreement stand out. First, white Americans acquire anti-black attitudes early and firmly. Almost all white Americans have somewhat, yet genuinely, negative attitudes toward blacks (Sears et al. 2000; Sidanius et al. 1997; Federico and Sidanius 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996). Second, although cultural norms have become increasingly negative toward straightforward racial prejudice and stereotypes, and support for the principle of racial equality has increased, support for policies to realize equality have either remained the same or fallen off (Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo 1998). Third, when white Americans are asked about racial policies, the tension between anti-black attitudes and racial norms creates ambivalence, instability, and inconsistency (Stoker 1998;

Hochschild 2001; Entman and Rojecki 2001; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997; Edsall and Edsall 1991).<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted, however, that anti-black attitudes have been considered a primary factor in determining policy judgments on race matters. While not disputing the importance of this argument, I contend that the focus on anti-black attitudes has underestimated the role of racial norms, undermining understanding of the formation of racial policy preferences. I also contend that taking cognitive engagement with the issues into account yields a more precise understanding of the formation of racial policy preferences.

Previous studies implicate the role of cognitive engagement in the formation of racial policy preferences. For instance, some individuals, including those who are racially prejudiced or hold strong racial stereotypes, tend to suppress their expressions of prejudiced or stereotyped policy preferences if they care about how others view them (Berinsky 1999, 2002; Krysan 1998; Kawakamin et al. 2000). Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens (1997) claims that “What we found is ... a reluctance among many of today’s southerners to admit their feelings about blacks, at least to survey interviewers who ask them directly. Just a few decades ago, even this reluctance did not exist” (347). And, Kinder and Winter (2001) find that “On issues of race..., for blacks and whites alike, speaking to a member of the opposite race resulted in more moderate opinions

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<sup>16</sup> Edsall and Edsall (1991) conclude that “race is no longer a straightforward, morally unambiguous force in American politics; instead, considerations of race are not deeply imbedded in the strategy and tactics of politics, in competing concepts of the function and responsibility of government, and in each voter’s conceptual structure of moral and partisan identity” (53). See also Sniderman and Piazza (1997) and Sniderman and Carmines (1993).

and therefore a smaller racial divide” (451). Similarly, Mendelberg (2001) shows that

unconscious priming can be controlled if people are motivated and aware enough to guard against it... All whites know the content of racial stereotypes and thus all whites are susceptible to racial priming, but some are more powerfully motivated to control it while others are less so (123-24).

In short, self-motivated controlling over racial stereotypes, impression management, or social desirability effects can lead some individuals to control or suppress their anti-black attitudes and respond more in-line with egalitarian beliefs. Racial attitudes are more malleable than previously thought and racial policy preferences are conditional on the extent to which individuals are motivated to manage or control their anti-black attitudes. As discussed in Chapter 2, this conclusion is compatible with the proposition that social judgments are determined by whether individuals have controlled, systematic decision-making processes or automatic, heuristic ones (Devine 1989; Devine et al. 2002; Fazio and Dunton 1995).

In this chapter I examine the interaction between anti-black attitudes and cognitive engagement, focusing on whether, and to what extent, cognitive engagement with judgmental tasks in survey processes moderates the impact of anti-black attitudes on policy judgments on race matters. I begin with a brief review of the existing literature on the tension between anti-black attitudes and racial norms. Then I present theories of self-censoring processes of racial attitudes. I argue that the impact of anti-black attitudes and racial norms on racial policy preferences is contingent upon the extent to which individuals cognitively engage in judgmental tasks at hand. I test this hypothesis, proposing a measure of



cognitive engagement in the survey context as a focal independent variable.

Finally, I present the findings and discuss the implications of the analysis.

## **THE UNEVEN EFFECTS OF ANTI-BLACK ATTITUDES AND RACIAL NORMS**

White Americans prize the principle of racial equality while also holding negative racial attitudes toward black Americans (Bobo and Kluegel 1993; Jackman and Muha 1984; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears 1988; Schuman et al. 1997; Mendelberg 2001). The tension between the racial norm and anti-black attitudes depends upon the contexts in which the issues are raised and framed (Nelson 2004; Stoker 1998; Kuklinski, Cobb, and Gilens 1997). In some contexts where the racial norm is presented, white Americans appear unprejudiced and are likely to support the race-targeted public policies. Krysan (1998) finds that the normative climate presently salient creates social desirability pressures, resulting in an overstatement of liberal racial attitudes, especially by more educated respondents. In other contexts when complete privacy is guaranteed (e.g., when questionnaires are mailed to and returned by respondents without any interviewer) or when racial cues designed to activate or prime anti-black attitudes are provided, white Americans express less liberal attitudes and are likely to oppose race-targeted public policies (Krysan 1998; Dovidio and Fazio 1992; Feagin and Sikes 1994; Bargh 1994, 1999; see also Mendelberg 2001).

It is important to note here that in normal conditions anti-black attitudes are more present in the minds of white Americans than the racial norm is, and that racial cues are more frequently available from the environment than the racial

norm is (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears and Citrin 1985; Kinder and Mendelberg 1995; Schuman et al. 1997).

On this score, three points deserve some emphasis. First, as Sears and his colleague state, “racial predispositions dominate all other factors in terms of individual correlations or regression coefficients, and in their capacity for explaining variance in policy preferences” (Sears et al. 1997, 44). Second, whites’ anti-black attitudes draw upon the residues of commonly held negative socialization processes in (white) American culture, so that they are evoked unconsciously or automatically. Therefore, racial framing or cues need not be explicit. Instead, subtle racial framings or cues that are implicit or with deniability are strong enough to evoke racial predispositions (Mendelberg 2001). Third, anti-black attitudes are acquired early in life and persist into adulthood, so they are embedded in (white) American culture (Schuman et al. 1997; Sears et al. 1997).

It follows that white Americans must put in an extensive effort and develop effective regulatory strategies in order to control or suppress their life-long racial predispositions. It is improbable, if not impossible, for ordinary white citizens to censor or regulate their anti-black attitudes in the normal conditions where the racial norm is not present or racial cues are readily available. I now turn to discuss the literature on individual-level mental mechanisms through which the tension between racial predispositions and racial norm works in producing racial policy preferences.

## **SELF-CENSORING PROCESS AND COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Scholars in social psychology have long debated the mental mechanisms underlying social judgments, focusing on the concepts of automaticity, control, consciousness, and intention (see Uleman and Bargh et al. 1989; Hassin, Uleman, and Bargh et al. 2005). The evidence is mixed. That is, controlled and conscious processing of making social judgments does not always exist, and automatic and preconscious processing depends on context and individual differences (Bargh 1989). Many scholars agree that the question of whether an individual takes automatic or controlled process to make policy judgments is empirical rather than theoretical. Indeed, we do not yet have the right model for predicting with confidence who takes which mode of information processing.

In addressing this question, it is important to distinguish between activation and application of racial predispositions (Bargh 1996; Devine 1989; Fiske 1989; Fazio and Dunton 1994). Activation is automatically determined by the accessibility of the information stored in memory and it is fit to the target object for making judgments. Application refers to use of activated and now available perception or evaluation of the target object. Judgments occur in two stages: (1) a relatively automatic characterization (i.e., activation) stage in which information stored in memory is retrieved and activated and thus ready to be used for judgmental tasks at hand and (2) a more deliberate correction (i.e., application) stage in which the initial characterization of the target object is

modified or reinforced in light of contextual and individual constraints on the target object.

Activation of racial predispositions is thought to be normal, given that racism is deeply embedded in white American culture (Sears et al. 1997; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 2001), despite lack of empirical grounds to expect automatic activation of racial predispositions for most white Americans.

Meanwhile, when individuals are motivated to be correct or unprejudiced, when cognitive resources are sufficient for making judgments, or when egalitarian racial norms are heightened, individuals control the judgmental processes by overriding activated perceptions or evaluations stemming from anti-black attitudes (Devine 1989; Fiske 1989; Monteith and Voils 1998; Gaertner and Dovidio 1986). According to Devine (1989) and Monteith, Sherman, and Devine (1998), the key to the self-censoring process is heightened cognitive engagement with the judgmental tasks at hand, which leads individuals to react consciously against the automatically-activated affective feelings.

Given this literature, it is reasonable to postulate that the impact of racial predispositions on racial policy judgments is moderated by one's attention to judgmental tasks about race matters. After controlling for individual differences especially in anti-black attitudes and political attitudes such as party identification and political ideology, some will succeed in restraining hasty stereotypical responses by heightened cognitive engagement with the judgmental tasks at hand while others will not (see Dovidio et al. 1997; Devine 1989; Devine and Monteith 1993; Fazio and Dunton 1997; Wegener and Petty 1995).

This postulation might be questioned in two ways. One might argue that although a majority of white Americans now censor their negative feelings on something as blatantly prejudiced as opposing a black family moving next door into their neighborhood, some of them also consider it legitimate to oppose affirmative action programs or federal programs to aid blacks, especially since many elites have opened the door by challenging such programs. In another respect, others might argue that it is too early to conclude the validity of the role of cognitive engagement in censoring racial predispositions because this conclusion has been found in laboratory contexts and corroborated by a convenient sample, but not from random surveys of the general population. While there is strong experimental support for censoring processes on a range of racial attitudes, these findings have not been supported by survey research based on large-scale random samples.

An important task is thus to present survey evidence of the significant role that cognitive engagement with the judgmental tasks plays among large, representative samples in the controversial issues like affirmative action programs and federal programs to aid blacks. I will show that survey respondents who have high levels of cognitive engagement tend to be less influenced by anti-black attitudes and more likely to support affirmative action and federal aid to blacks.

## **DEFINING COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN A SURVEY CONTEXT**

There are many conceptualizations of cognitive engagement including personal relevance, issue involvement, task importance, accountability, and

responsibility for message evaluation. All these categories are based on the assumption that individuals who are motivated to engage in judgmental tasks are likely to hold different opinions from those who are not motivated to do so (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Petty and Cacioppo 1986, 1990; Eagly and Chaiken 1993). In other words, individuals who consider judgmental tasks important or personally relevant in the survey process are likely to expend cognitive efforts in shaping and expressing their judgments. In addition, given the normative climate in which anti-black attitudes are considered socially undesirable traits, it is reasonable to presume that as one's cognitive engagement with the judgmental tasks associated with race matters increases, he or she is likely to care about automatically activated negative racial considerations.

By cognitive engagement, I refer to the extent to which an individual takes cares about the judgmental tasks that he or she is encountering in the survey processes. A high degree of cognitive engagement reflects conscious, effortful, and controlled engagement with the survey tasks for making judgments on and expressing opinions about policy issue. I will discuss how I operationalized this concept of cognitive engagement in the survey context in the next section.

## **DATA AND MEASURES**

For the analyses I used the 1996 and 2004 National Election Studies (NES). The reason that only two data sets were analyzed is other NES data sets do not contain the questions necessary for measuring cognitive engagement. Since there is no theoretical reason to believe that the hypothesized relationships among

the variables of interest in the 1996 NES are different from those in the 2004 NES, I pooled the two data sets for multivariate analysis. For coding schemes of all the measures except cognitive engagement, I followed Sears et al. (1997), which is a robust study that demonstrates the dominant impact of anti-black attitudes on racial policy preferences. Variable codes and coding schemes are provided in Appendix 3.A. And descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in Table 3.1.

### Dependent Variables

For racial policy preferences, two items—federal programs to aid blacks and affirmative action—were tapped. The question wording of the former was “Should we increase or decrease federal spending on programs benefiting blacks.” The question wording of the latter was “Are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks.”

The NES codes federal assistance as 1 for “[g]overnment should help blacks” and 7 for “Blacks should help themselves” and affirmative action as 1 for “Favor” and 5 for “Oppose.” Thus higher scores represent more opposition to racially targeted policies. Data shows that 83% and 86% of white respondents oppose affirmative action programs in the 1996 and 2004 NES, respectively. Forty percent and 57% of whites think that blacks should help themselves in the 1996 and 2004 NES, respectively.

### Independent Variables

*The Key Variable: Cognitive Engagement.* A critical task in this study is to develop a measure that can serve as an indicator of cognitive engagement when

survey participants respond to questions about the race-targeted public policies. Several items, such as political participation (such as engagement in political discussions with friends and contribution of money to political candidates), political interest (such as campaign interest), and media use seem suitable measures of cognitive engagement. These are all self-reported measures and thus are susceptible to social desirability bias. The presence of a social desirability bias attenuates or inflates relationships between the variables (Fisher 1993). Research that does not take steps to minimize the social desirability bias likely reaches theoretically and practically spurious conclusions (Fisher 1993). And when it comes to race, social desirability bias seriously damages the validity of the estimated relationships among the variables (Krysan 1998; Cook and Campbell 1979; Runkel and McGrath 1972). As Fisher (1993) contends, it is necessary to be cautious when adopting self-reported measure that is especially related to socially desirable attributes as dependent or independent variables.

Regarding the tendency of survey respondents' exaggeration in the items related to socially desirable traits, the interviewer's ratings of a respondent's "general level of information about politics and public affairs" have previously been used to measure political knowledge (Bartels 1996; Gay 2002). It turns out that despite its subjectivity, this item is a surprisingly good measure of political knowledge (Zaller 1986; see also Luskin and Bullock 2004). As Zaller (1986) indicates, "these five-point items [of interviewers' ratings about respondents' level of political knowledge—my addition] were very powerful, and that they



were essentially free of contamination by interviewers who might be biased in favor of higher status respondents” (17).

Given this result, it seems reasonable to use other interviewer ratings of the respondent attitudes in the survey process. The items, such as the respondent’s interest in the interview, the respondent’s sincerity in their judgmental tasks, and the respondent’s cooperation in the survey processes, reflect how sincerely, cooperatively, and actively the respondent engages in the judgmental tasks through the interview process. These items can be considered a good proxy for the respondent’s general level of cognitive engagement with the survey questions and the judgmental tasks. That is, survey respondents with the attitudes of high levels of sincerity, cooperation, and interest are likely to consciously involve themselves in their opinion formation processes rather than produce hasty responses through automatic, unconscious, effortless information processes.

In another respect, however, these items are a broad, general-level estimation of the respondent’s involvement in the whole survey process, not a domain-specific estimation of attitudes. So it is needed to construct a measure of cognitive engagement specific to the respondent’s attitudes associated with race matters. To this end, I took the question of “[h]ow important is the issue of aid to blacks to the respondent personally,” which measures personal importance of the issue of aid to blacks. Given the finding that individuals try to cognitively engage issues that are personally important (see Maheswaran and Chaiken 1991), it is legitimate to assume that this item functions as an issue-specific weight to race matters.

To operationalize the four items (i.e., three interviewer's ratings and personal importance of the issue of aid to blacks), I first summed the three instrumental items of the interviewer ratings of the participants involvement in, cooperation with, and sincerity in the survey processes, which are significantly correlated ( $\alpha = 0.686$ ). The three instrumental items represent the general level of cognitive engagement with the survey processes. Then, I multiplied the sum of the three instrumental items by the personal importance of aid to blacks positing a joint effect of cognitive engagement with the survey tasks in general and personal importance of aid to blacks on racial policy preferences. That is, the effect of the three instrumental items on racial policy preferences is greater at higher levels of perceived importance of the issue of aid to blacks and the effect of personal importance of aid to blacks on racial policy preferences is greater for those who are highly engaged in the survey processes in general. This postulation is theoretically sound and supported by the significant correlation of the sum of the three instrumental items and the measure of personal importance of the issue of aid to blacks ( $r = 0.054, p < 0.03$  in the 1996 NES;  $r = 0.07, p < 0.024$  in the 2004 NES).

To test the performance of the measure of cognitive engagement, I examined the correlations between the measure of cognitive engagement and other measures that are supposedly related to cognitive engagement, such as self-reported campaign interest, the reviewer's estimation of the respondent's intelligence, the intensity of political ideology, and turnout. Performance of a measure depends on how it shows as stable and consistent relationships with other

measures as is expected by theory. As presented in Table 3.2, my measure of cognitive engagement consistently shows significant relationships with relevant attitudinal variables. Those who are rated more knowledgeable by the interviewer, are more interested in political campaigns, hold a strong political ideology, and participate in a poll are more likely to highly engage themselves in the judgmental tasks during the survey processes.

I also examined if the item of issue importance regarding aid to blacks covaries with competing explanatory variables (i.e., symbolic racism and racial stereotypes). If this is the case, the importance of aid to blacks and cognitive engagement represents the same attitudes domain as symbolic racism and racial stereotypes. The results presented in Table 3.3 show that individual items that make up cognitive engagement are not correlated with the symbolic racism or racial stereotypes with two exceptions. It is worth emphasizing that the personal importance of aid to blacks is not correlated with the competing independent variables, symbolic racism and racial stereotypes. Finally, the composite measure of cognitive engagement is not correlated with symbolic racism and racial stereotypes. This indicates that my measure of cognitive engagement does not share the attitudinal dimension to which symbolic racism and racial stereotypes belong.

*Competing Variables.* I included two competing explanatory variables, symbolic racism and racial stereotypes, to estimate the impact of racial predispositions on racial policy preferences. For this, I followed the measures used in previous studies. Symbolic racism consists of the four attitude domains—

denial of continuing racial discrimination, blacks should work harder, blacks' excessive demands, and undeserved advantage for blacks (see Sears et al. 1997).

To measure racial stereotypes, I followed Sears et al. (1997). Racial stereotypes consists of the respondent's ratings of blacks on 7-point scales whose endpoints are that blacks are hard-working—lazy, intelligent—unintelligent, and trustworthy—untrustworthy.

*Control Variables.* I also included party identification, political ideology, and socioeconomic status variables including age, gender, and region, which are generally expected to affect racial policy preferences (Sears et al. 1997; Kinder and Sanders 1996).

## MODELS

I ran two models using a least-square estimator. Model (1) replicates Sears et al. (1997) as a baseline model by estimating the impacts of symbolic racism and racial stereotypes on the racial policy preferences. The functional form of the model is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Racial Policy Preferences} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{Symbolic Racism} + \beta_2 * \text{Racial Stereotype} \\ & + \beta_3 * \text{Party Identification} + \beta_4 * \text{Political Ideology} + \beta_5 * \text{Age} + \beta_6 * \text{South} \\ & + \beta_7 * \text{Male} + u \\ (1) \end{aligned}$$

Where,  $\alpha$  is constant,  $\beta$ s are ordinary least-squares regression coefficients, and  $u$  is an error term; The model was run on federal assistance to blacks and affirmative action, separately; and age, south, and male are dummy variable. Details of coding schemes for other variables are presented in Appendix 3.A.

Then, to test if the effect of racial predispositions on racial policy preferences is moderated by cognitive engagement, Model (2) incorporates the variables of cognitive engagement and two interaction terms of cognitive engagement by symbolic racism and by racial stereotype. The functional form of the model is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Racial Policy Preferences} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{Symbolic Racism} + \beta_2 * \text{Racial Stereotype} \\ & + \beta_3 * \text{Party Identification} + \beta_4 * \text{Political Ideology} + \beta_5 * \text{Age} + \beta_6 * \text{South} \\ & + \beta_7 * \text{Male} + \beta_8 * \text{Cognitive Engagement} + \beta_9 * (\text{Cognitive} \\ & \text{Engagement} * \text{Symbolic Racism}) + \beta_{10} * (\text{Cognitive Engagement} * \text{Racial} \\ & \text{Stereotype}) + u \end{aligned}$$

**(2)**

Where,  $\alpha$  is constant,  $\beta$ s are ordinary least-squares regression coefficients, and  $u$  is an error term; The model was run on federal assistance to blacks and affirmative action, separately; age, south, and male are dummy variable; and cognitive engagement and two interaction terms are incorporated. Details of coding schemes for other variables are also presented in Appendix 3.A.

In Model (2), I expect that cognitive engagement will be significant. I also expect that the interaction terms will be significant, indicating that the impact of symbolic racism or racial stereotype is dependent on one's level of cognitive engagement. That is, individuals that are highly involved in racial issues will be more likely to support race-targeted policies.

## RESULTS

As is reported in Table 3.4, the results of OLS regressing the two policy preferences as the dependent variables onto the explanatory variables support my

argument and yield a better understanding of the formation of racial policy preferences. First, as expected, party identification and political ideology play significant roles in determining racial policy preferences in both Models **(1)** and **(2)**. Republicans and conservatives are more likely than Democrats and liberals to oppose racially targeted policies.

Second, as expected, symbolic racism and racial stereotypes show robust, positive impacts on the dependent variables, which indicates that respondents with more symbolic racism and racial stereotypes are more likely to oppose federal aid to blacks and preferential hiring and promotion of blacks.

Third, Model **(2)** reveals that the coefficient of symbolic racism is not statistically significant while the coefficient of racial stereotypes is significant. These results indicate that the impact of anti-black attitudes decrease when cognitive engagement is included in the model. In contrast, cognitive engagement shows a statistically significant effect.

Fourth, the interaction between cognitive engagement and symbolic racism is significantly related to one's position on federal assistance and affirmative action, which indicates that magnitude of the effect of symbolic racism changes with different levels of cognitive engagement. The existence of significant joint effect of symbolic racism and cognitive engagement suggests that Model **(1)** provides an inaccurate estimation of the true relationships between the dependent and independent variables. In addition, given that the adjusted R squares of Model **(2)** are greater than those of Model **(1)**, Model **(2)** is a more

accurate account for racial policy preferences and explains more of the variation in the dependent variables.

Finally, the cognitive engagement-symbolic racism coefficient of the interaction term of symbolic racism and cognitive engagement is positive. That is, the higher the symbolic racism, the greater the effect of cognitive engagement on racial policy preferences. By the same token, the higher the cognitive engagement, the greater the effect of symbolic racism on racial policy preferences.

For a graphic demonstration of the interaction effects of cognitive engagement and symbolic racism on policy preferences, I divided respondents into those with high and low levels of cognitive engagement. High cognitive engagement includes those who are one standard deviation above the mean of cognitive engagement and low cognitive engagement includes those who are one standard deviation below the mean.<sup>17</sup> Predicted values of the dependent variable at different levels of symbolic racism are then calculated for those who with high and low levels of cognitive engagement.

The results, as illustrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, reveal that those who belong to high level of cognitive engagement are more likely than with low levels of cognitive engagement to support federal aid to blacks and preferential hiring and promotion of blacks at the same level of symbolic racism. More precisely, those with high levels of cognitive engagement are more likely than those with

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<sup>17</sup> No theoretical standard exists for deciding what level of cognitive engagement is high (and low). The actual cut points that I took here are arbitrary.

low levels of cognitive engagement to moderate their opposition of race-targeted policies when racial dispositions are relatively weak. Thus, among those who are low on the racism scale, moving from low to high level of cognitive engagement induces more support for race-targeted policies.

## **DISCUSSION**

There are at least three noteworthy implications that warrant more discussion. First, expressing racial policy preferences is not only a function of racial predispositions but also a function of cognitive engagement. The greater cognitive engagement leads to more supports for race-targeted public policies.

Second, racial predispositions are persevering, but they are neither immutably nor indelibly so. The impact of racial predispositions on racial policy preferences vary according to levels of cognitive engagement with the judgmental tasks. Racial predispositions are not a cross-cutting, dominant factor that drives racial policy preferences. More precisely, symbolic racism means different things to those who are more or less cognitively engaged in judgmental tasks regarding race matters as well as to liberals-Democrats and conservatives-Republicans.

Third, previous models that do not take cognitive engagement into account when explaining racial policy preferences are at least under-specified and potentially misleading. Racial policy preferences of white Americans are better predicted when different levels of cognitive engagement with judgmental tasks are taken into account.



## **LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Laboratory studies have established that controlled forms of information processing or heightened attention to judgmental tasks is important for overriding an automatic, race-biased response. But this finding has never been corroborated by large-scale survey data. The analyses here benefit from something missing from previous experimental designs: external validity from a random, representative sample of the general population.

The measure of cognitive engagement in the survey context I devised here is reasonably sound and functioned well, yet falls short of the requirements that some might find necessary. Indeed, for a better measure of cognitive engagement, we need to directly observe mental processes through which individuals engage in judgmental tasks to make political judgments. To confirm and extend the results reported here, I also have experimental data. I now turn to the experimental design that allowed me to directly observe individual's information processing and to measure cognitive engagement during information processing.

**TABLE 3.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>The 1996 NES</b>					
Cognitive Engagement (4 items; $\alpha = 0.453$ )	1,648	0.05	1	0.62	0.20
Symbolic Racism (2 items)	1,524	2	10	6.42	1.46
Racial Stereotypes (3 items; $\alpha = 0.831$ )	1,446	3	21	11.57	3.02
Party Identification	1,695	1	7	3.68	2.10
Political Ideology	1,651	1	5	3.48	1.84
Knowledge (6 items; $\alpha = 0.607$ )	1,521	0	6	3.68	1.62
Education	1,711	1	7	4.10	1.65
Age	1,714	18	99	47.60	17.49
South (dummy)	1,714	0	1		
Federal Assistance	1,269	1	7	4.69	1.62
Affirmative Action	1,282	1	5	4.21	1.35
<b>The 2004 NES</b>					
Cognitive Engagement (4 items; $\alpha = 0.568$ )	1,155	0.12	1	0.64	0.18
Symbolic Racism (4 items; $\alpha = 0.781$ )	1,046	4	20	13.40	3.99
Racial Stereotypes (3 items; $\alpha = 0.802$ )	1,066	3	21	11.27	2.95
Party Identification	1,195	1	7	3.88	2.09
Political Ideology	1,156	1	5	3.37	1.88
Knowledge (5 items; $\alpha = 0.739$ )	1,066	1	5	2.89	1.61
Education	1,212	0	7	4.30	1.61
Age	1,212	18	90	47.27	17.14
South (dummy)	1,212	0	1		
Federal Assistance	782	1	7	4.82	1.63
Affirmative Action	744	1	5	4.35	1.14

*Source:* The 1996 and 2004 National Election Studies.

**TABLE 3.2. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT  
AND OTHER FACTORS**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>The 1996 NES</b>	<b>The 2004 NES</b>
<b>Political Knowledge</b>	0.093*** (1,466)	0.171*** (1,017)
<b>Interviewers' Ratings of Respondents' Intelligence</b>	0.208*** (1,647)	0.285*** (1,155)
<b>Campaign Interest</b>	0.239*** (1,479)	0.255*** (1,017)
<b>Intensity of Political Ideology</b>	0.058* (1,551)	0.185*** (1,141)
<b>Turnout</b>	0.127*** (1,479)	0.149*** (1,155)

*Notes:* 1. Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients. 2. Valid number of cases is in parentheses.  
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

**TABLE 3.3. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE ITEMS  
INCORPORATED IN COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND SYMBOLIC  
RACISM/RACIAL STEREOTYPES**

	The 1996 NES		The 2004 NES	
	Symbolic Racism	Racial Stereotypes	Symbolic Racism	Racial Stereotypes
<b>Cooperation</b>	0.012 (0.529)	-0.049 (0.077)	-0.100** (0.006)	-0.032 (0.375)
<b>Sincerity</b>	0.015 (0.590)	-0.021 (0.441)	-0.112** (0.002)	-0.023 (0.524)
<b>Interest</b>	0.063* (0.021)	-0.041 (0.141)	0.016 (0.670)	0.000 (0.994)
<b>Importance of Aid to Blacks</b>	0.016 (0.547)	0.020 (0.463)	0.068 (0.061)	0.065 (0.071)
<b>Cognitive Engagement</b>	0.035 (0.196)	.002 (0.948)	0.037 (0.320)	0.017 (0.646)

*Notes:* 1. Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients. 2. *t-ratio* is in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

**TABLE 3.4. THE IMPACT OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT AND  
OTHER VARIABLES ON RACIAL POLICIES, POOLED DATA OF THE  
1996 AND 2004 NES**

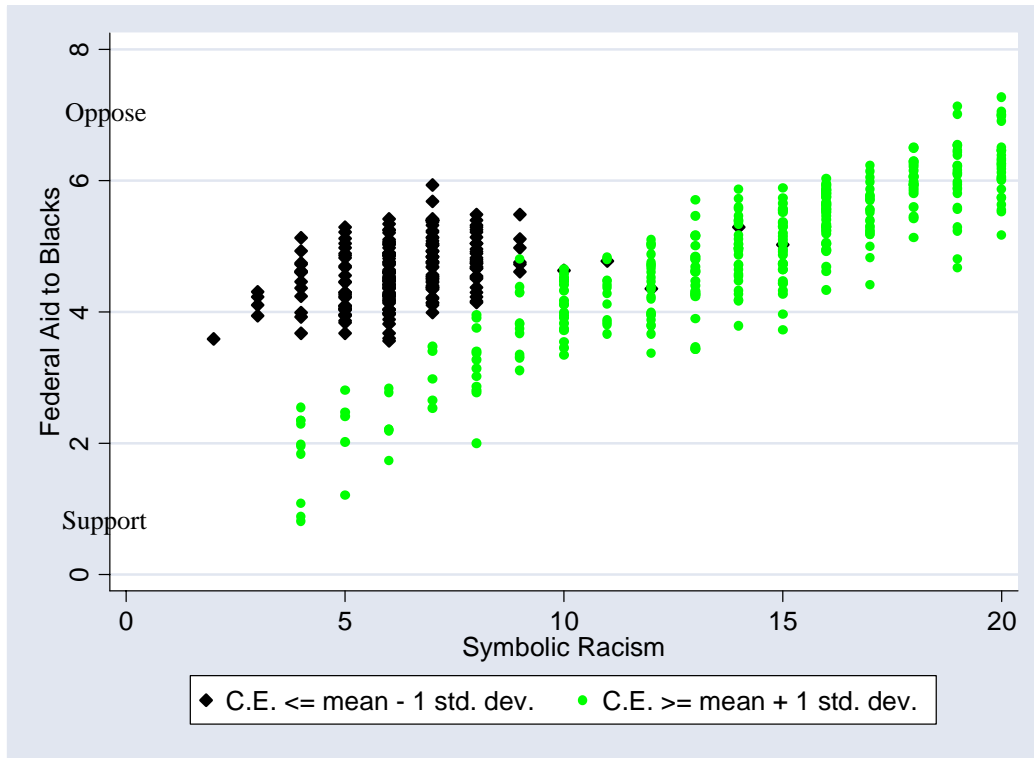
	<b>Federal Assistance</b>		<b>Affirmative Action</b>	
	<b>Model (1)</b>	<b>Model (2)</b>	<b>Model (1)</b>	<b>Model (2)</b>
<b>Symbolic Racism</b>	0.059*** (0.008)	0.004 (0.026)	0.054*** (0.016)	-0.004 (0.030)
<b>Racial Stereotypes</b>	0.123*** (0.012)	0.078** (0.025)	0.095*** (0.014)	0.092** (0.029)
<b>Cognitive Engagement (C.E.)</b>		-0.027*** (0.002)		-0.026*** (0.003)
<b>C.E. * Symbolic Racism</b>		0.251*** (0.041)		0.255*** (0.046)
<b>C.E. * Racial Stereotypes</b>		0.041 (0.032)		-0.022 (0.038)
<b>Party Identification</b>	0.097*** (0.019)	0.127*** (0.019)	0.087*** (0.022)	0.116*** (0.022)
<b>Political Ideology</b>	0.124*** (0.021)	0.072*** (0.021)	0.144*** (0.026)	0.095*** (0.026)
<b>Age</b>	- 0.007*** (0.002)	-0.005** (0.002)	-0.003 (0.090)	-0.0009 (0.002)
<b>South</b>	-0.070 (0.075)	-0.121 (0.074)	-0.339 (0.090)	-0.369*** (0.089)
<b>Male</b>	0.011 (0.069)	0.023 (0.067)	-0.021 (0.083)	-0.007 (0.082)
<b>Adj. R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.177	0.235	0.112	0.153
<b>N</b>	1816	1789	1860	1823

*Source:* The 1996 and 2004 National Election Studies.

*Notes:* 1. Entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard error in parentheses. 2. Positive sign indicates that higher values of the variables produce more *opposition* to the federal assistance to blacks and affirmative action. 3. Party Identification is coded 1 as Democrat, 3 as Independent, and 5 as Republican; Political Ideology is coded 1 as liberal, 3 as moderate, and 5 as conservative. 4. South and Male are dummy variables, coded 1 as south and male. 4. Political Knowledge was initially entered into the analysis, along with Cognitive Engagement. Significant effects were found but it is dropped for model simplicity.

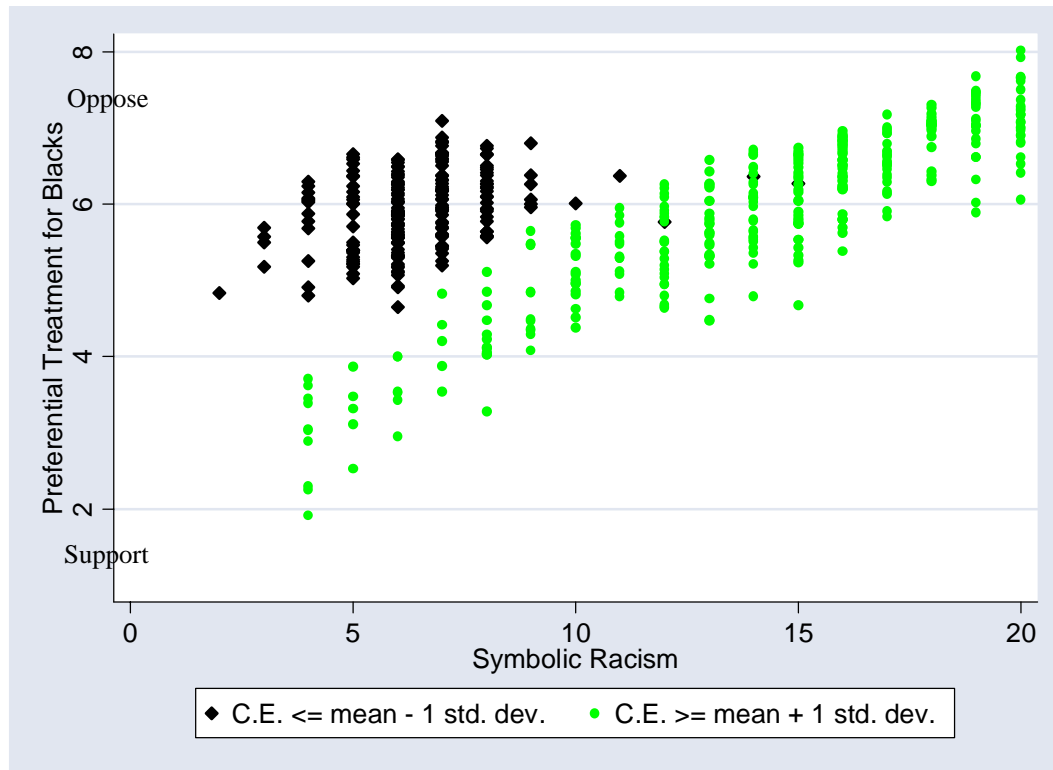
\*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

**FIGURE 3.1. PREDICTED VALUES OF FEDERAL AID TO BLACKS FOR THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT (C.E.) BY SYMBOLIC RACISM**



*Notes:* 1. Federal Aid to Blacks is coded 1 as strong supporter and 7 as strong opponents. 2. Symbolic Racism is coded 0 for non-racists and 20 for racists. 3. Those who are attentive (circle and gray dots) are more likely to support Federal Aid to Blacks if they hold the same level of Symbolic Racism as those who are not attentive (square and black dots) do. 4. Predicted values are calculated based on Model (2).

**FIGURE 3.2. PREDICTED VALUES OF PREFERENTIAL HIRING AND PROMOTION OF BLACKS FOR THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIGH AND LOW LEVELS OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT (C.E.) BY SYMBOLIC RACISM**



*Notes:* 1. Federal Aid to Blacks is coded 1 as strong supporter and 7 as strong opponents. 2. Symbolic Racism is coded 0 for non-racists and 20 for racists. 3. Those who are attentive (circle and gray dots) are more likely to support Federal Aid to Blacks if they hold the same level of Symbolic Racism as those who are not attentive (square and black dots) do. 4. Predicted values are calculated based on Model (2).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND DATA

Our inability to directly observe an individual's information processing has left many questions unaddressed. Only a few studies in political science have examined who actually acquires information and uses it in forming and changing political judgments. Lau and Redlawsk (2001, 2002; Lau 1995; Redlawsk 2003) deserve credit in this instance. They introduced the "process-tracing method" into political science and developed it to study citizens' voting decisions. The process-tracing method is based on the assumption that decision-making and judgments can best be studied by the data collected while decision-making and judgments are being produced (see Abelson and Levi 1985; Ford et al. 1989; Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1993). This method enables researchers to directly identify what information is accessed and how long it is studied. This knowledge then can be used to make inferences about how acquisition of information affects subsequent political judgments (Ford et al. 1989; Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody 1997; Geva et al. 2000; Lau and Redlawsk 1992; Taber and Steenbergen 1995).

Relying on the process-tracing method, I conducted two experiments to estimate the determinant and consequence of acquisition of new information in forming policy judgments. Each experiment serves independently to accomplish distinct research goals, and both experiments work together to meet requirement for "pre-treatment and post-treatment test control group design" in which attitudes are measured before and after treatment (Campbell and Stanley 1963).



A first experiment (Experiment 1) was designed to examine the factors that drive variability in individuals' cognitive efforts in seeking and processing the given information. A pre-treatment survey was performed to measure participant's political and racial attitudes. Then participants were free to access the given information as much as they wanted, and their behaviors in information seeking were tracked and recorded. A total of 658 subjects were recruited from 16 introductory government classes at The University of Texas at Austin (13 classes) and Austin Community College (3 classes). Data collected from this experiment are analyzed in Chapter 5.

A second experiment (Experiment 2) was designed to estimate the impact of acquisition of new information on policy judgments. Contrary to Experiment 1, participants here were asked to first seek out information and then to complete a post-treatment survey. A total of 407 participants, recruited from four introductory government classes at The University of Texas at Austin, were assigned to the treatment—the two distinct sets of information—at random. A group of participants was exposed to the factual information about affirmative action programs. Another group of participants received the partisan information about affirmative action programs. From this experiment, I sought to identify and explain the distinct effect of the two sets of information, along with the effect of the different quantity in acquisition of the information, on policy judgments on affirmative action programs. Findings are reported in Chapter 6.

In this chapter, I describe the two experiments in detail and discuss the characteristic features of the experiments—a web-based, online survey combined

with the computer-aided process-tracing method. Throughout the chapter, I call attention to how the data collected by the two experiments makes it possible to uncover unexplored aspects in the formation of whites' policy judgments on affirmative action programs.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 1,065 undergraduate students participated in the two experiments from May to October 2005. Table 4.1 shows the number of participants across each of the 20 classes.

In Experiment 1, 658 participants were recruited, and the number of white participants was 302 (46%). Participants were evenly divided by sex, and the average age was 20. Among the white participants who identified themselves with political parties, Republicans numbered 42%, Democrats 39%, and independents 19%. And, conservatives numbered 26%, liberals 39%, and moderates 36%. Other characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 4.2.

In Experiment 2, 407 participants were recruited, and the number of white participants was 177 (43.5%). Among white participants, 92 (51%) participants received partisan information and 85 (49%) participants received factual information. There was no significant difference in terms of sex, and the average age was 20. Among white respondents who identified themselves with political parties, Republicans numbered 45%, Democrats 38%, and independents 17%. And, conservatives numbered 31%, liberals 38%, and moderates 31%. Other characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 4.3.

This convenience sample showed substantial variance on key attitudinal characteristics.

## **PROCEDURES**

The courses' instructors announced the experiments to the class during lecture by giving students the web address where students could participate on their own time using the internet. Students who decided to participate in the experiment accessed the experiment's web site, using their own internet-connected computers at their convenience. When participants opened up the first page of the experimental site, they were given the general instructions for the experimental tasks.

Each experiment consisted of two sessions, an "information session" and a "survey session." In the survey session, subjects were asked to complete a fairly standard questionnaire designed to measure their political and racial attitudes. The wording of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 4.A. In the information session, subjects were exposed to a series of information regarding affirmative action programs and could learn about the issue by clicking the label of the information they personally chose to explore. I tracked and recorded subjects' behaviors of seeking information by using computer programs. I will discuss details of the information provided and the technique I took for tracing subjects' activities of information seeking later in this chapter.

## MANIPULATION OF EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT

Experimental stimuli, a series of the information about affirmative action programs, were manipulated in two ways for three randomly assigned groups. First, I varied the order of the two sessions in Experiments 1 and 2. Subjects in Experiment 1 were asked to complete the survey *before* they were exposed to the experimental treatment, while subjects in Experiment 2 were asked to complete the survey *after* they were exposed to the experimental treatment. Experiments 1 and 2 can be diagramed as follows.

Random Assignment	Pre-treatment Test	Treatment	Post-treatment Test
<b>Experiment 1: Control Group</b>	Yes	<b>Partisan and Factual Information<sup>†</sup></b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Experiment 2: Treatment Group 1</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Partisan Information</b>	Yes
<b>Experiment 2: Treatment Group 2</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Factual Information</b>	Yes

<sup>†</sup> Subjects in this group had the information session. Yet this information session was a dummy session because attitudes were measured before subjects were exposed to treatment. Subjects' behaviors in the information session can be explained in terms of attitudinal variables measured in the pre-treatment survey session.

As is illustrated, the survey responses in Experiment 1 were measured from a pre-treatment test and thus were *not* affected by experimental treatment, while the survey responses in Experiment 2 were measured from a post-treatment test and thus were supposed to be affected by experimental stimuli. Given this experimental setting, the effect of the treatment on the policy judgments on

affirmative action programs can be calculated by the comparison between the pre-treatment test score in Experiment 1 and the average of the post-treatment test scores in the two treatment groups in Experiment 2. Additionally, Experiment 1 made it possible to estimate the effect of political and racial attitudes on information seeking behaviors by regressing pre-treatment test scores of political and racial attitudes on information seeking behaviors.

Second, subjects in Experiment 2 were randomly assigned into two groups. Subjects in each group were provided with different sets of information, partisan and factual information. Subjects exposed to the factual information regarding affirmative action programs read the introduction that follows

Many believe that substantive, factual knowledge is essential to make a sound, rational decision. Here are *Statistics of Lives of African Americans*, *Historical Origins of Affirmative Action Programs (AAP)*, *Must-know Rulings of the Supreme Court on AAP*, and *Recent Events regarding AAP*.

Subjects exposed to the partisan information about affirmative action programs read the instructions that follow

A shortcut to posit yourself on policy issues is to look at the positions of reference groups or individuals who you can trust. Here are ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the *Presidents and prominent Politicians*, *Public Interest Groups*, *the Political Parties*, and *Public Opinion Polls*.

With the random assignment of subjects into the two groups with the two different types of experimental stimuli, the effects of different types of information can be estimated by the comparison between the post-treatment test scores in the two groups. Also, the effects of information seeking can be estimated by the comparison between the pre-treatment test score in Experiment 1

(as a test score of the control group) and the post-treatment test scores in Experiment 2 (as a test score of the treatment group).

Experiment 1 does not seem like a typical experiment by itself in the sense that there is no randomization of the sample or manipulation of stimuli. Yet, survey responses in Experiment 1 function as the pre-treatment test score, which can be compared with the post-treatment test score in Experiment 2. And, the information session in Experiment 1 was not a necessary component for the study of the consequence of information seeking in policy judgments, but it made it possible to examine how an individual subject sought out the given information and how political and racial attitudes measured prior to information seeking are responsible for the variation in individuals' information seeking behaviors.

### **BRIEFING DOCUMENTS AS EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT**

Subjects were provided with a great amount of information about affirmative action programs through the experimental web sites. The briefing documents in Experiment 1 consisted of 40 web pages under eight labels. Among them, 20 web pages contained the partisan information and another 20 web pages contained the factual information. And, each label had four to six sub-web pages.<sup>18</sup> The partisan and the factual information were presented in different color schemes to help subjects recognize that they were given two different kinds of

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<sup>18</sup> Each label had the following number of sub web pages: the arguments/perspectives of the Presidents and prominent politicians (5 pages), of the public interest groups (5 pages), of the two political parties (5 pages), the public opinion polls (5 pages), statistics of lives of African Americans (6 pages), historical origins of affirmative action programs (5 pages), must-know

information: Green for the partisan information and orange for the factual information.

Subjects in the two groups in Experiment 2 were provided with 20 web pages under four labels, respectively. One group was provided with the partisan information and the other group was provided with the factual information. A full script of the briefing documents was presented in Appendix 4.B.

### **MOTIVATIONAL CUES**

Evidence shows that very simple instructions like “Think about the issue at hand as if you were a responsible public official” facilitates cognitive engagement with the issue (Kuklinski et al. 2001). To invoke increased involvement in the given information, I provided several motivational cues that underscored (1) the importance of the issue of affirmative action programs, (2) the conceptual ambiguity regarding affirmative action programs, (3) the general ignorance of American citizens about race matters, (4) some hard questions on the nature of economic and social inequality between the races and the effectiveness and the nature of affirmative action programs, and (5) a special request to think about the issue as a responsible public official. The instructions were as follows:

Affirmative action has been one of the most controversial policy issues in the U.S. The issue has historically been, and continues to be, plagued by ambiguity surrounding the concept and by the manner in which the various policies have been implemented. This is primarily because since the 1970s there have been many different kinds of affirmative action regulations, programs, understandings, and purposes.

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rulings of the Supreme Court on affirmative action (4 pages) and recent events regarding affirmative action (5 pages).

It might be easy to answer the question of whether to support or oppose AAP. But it might NOT be easy to explain to others about what one knows about them. According to a study, approximately 40 percent of people are completely unfamiliar with the concept of Affirmative Action; and many of those who claimed familiarity provide a vague or inaccurate definition. This study indicates that many people do not have knowledge about AAP, and that they lack opportunity to acquire information to enlarge their knowledge and sharpen their rationale for or against AAP.

As you access the websites here, we want you to try to think about the following questions: Do the nature and magnitude of continuing economic and social inequality between the races require concerted public and private action, or are natural forces in the economy satisfactorily narrowing the gaps? Do race-based discrimination and exclusion continue to be important factors in American life, affecting the opportunities and welfare of blacks and other minorities, or are they not aberrant and insubstantial? Is affirmative action effective in combating discrimination and exclusion? Is it consistent with inviolable principles in the U.S.?

You can best answer the survey questions when you are more informed and imagine yourself as a responsible public official. Feel free to think and take time while processing information and answering the survey questions.

Given the length of the motivational cues, it is important to identify who paid more or less attention to them. I measured the time span that an individual participant expended in reading them, which turned out to vary across individuals.

### **COMPUTER-AIDED PROCESS TRACING METHOD**

To accurately represent or describe the mental mechanisms of individuals' decision-making process requires a methodology that captures their activity during the decision process, without constraining their ability to drive the process. Process-tracing methods allow the study of issues that have not been previously explored, in this instance acquisition of new information. Acquisition of the information was identified and recorded by computer programs. I used



ColdFusion<sup>19</sup> commands and functions to enable the extension of standard HTML file with database commands. More precisely, by using ColdFusion, I wrote and put ColdFusion tags,<sup>20</sup> which were invisible to respondents but functioned to identify the time and the web pages that a subject hit and transfer them in a database server (MS SQL server) I designated, into the HTML<sup>21</sup> texts of the experimental web site.

Respondents started with an introduction screen (see Figure a in Appendix 4.B) linked to a main menu screen (see Figures b, c, and d in Appendix 4.B). To acquire the information about affirmative action programs a respondent had to click on the label of the information to enter into the specific information screen. Each label was linked to the specific information regarding certain aspects of affirmative action programs, as well as a small section that displayed the options in the main menu. Thus respondents could keep seeking the information by clicking the options at their convenience. The clicks that a respondent made and the time she clicked were captured in the database server.

My measurement of information processing is thus a direct estimation of the actual activities of the subjects—a behavioral measure<sup>22</sup>—rather than self-reported one. Scholars warn of measurement-induced distortions of self-reported

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<sup>19</sup> ColdFusion is a development tool that enables the creation of interactive, dynamic, and information-rich Web sites. ColdFusion can communicate with databases or spreadsheets and extract information to dynamically create Web pages.

<sup>20</sup> Tags mean commanding codes used in ColdFusion.

<sup>21</sup> HTML (hypertext markup language) refers to the document format used on the Web. Web pages are built with HTML tags (codes) embedded in the text. HTML defines the page layout, fonts and graphic elements as well as the hypertext links to other documents on the Web.

beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors relating to social desirability<sup>23</sup> (e.g., Campbell and Stanley 1966; Cook and Campbell 1979; Runkel and McGrath 1972). Behavioral measures are relatively free from social desirability bias. My position should not be taken as an overall indictment of self-reported measures of attitude and behavior. Instead, I contend that behavioral measures are less likely to mis-specify actual use of new information, thus undermining attempts to observe subsequent effects. I do not intend to argue that my measure of information processing adopted in this research estimates a whole array of information processing. Like any new measures, my measure has some bugs that must be worked out (I will discuss them later in this chapter). Nonetheless, as a new measure for exploring information search and process, it offers an exciting new avenue for studying how new information is gathered and how it is used in policy judgments.

## **DEPENDENT MEASURES**

### The Dependent Variable in Experiment 1

The dependent variable in Experiment 1 is cognitive engagement, which was measured in two folds. In one way, cognitive engagement with the information available from the environment might be either effortful/time-consuming or effortless/time-saving (Tyler et al. 1979; Chaiken and Trope 1999).

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<sup>22</sup> “Behavioral measure” refers to a measure that experimenters can “directly observe the behavior of subjects by, for example, videotaping them and later examining the tapes for characteristics such as facial expressions or tendency to dominate in a group” (McDermott 2002, 35).

In this regard, “time” for seeking and processing new information to make political judgments is a natural characteristic of individuals’ cognitive engagement with judgmental tasks. The more time a subject expends in seeking and processing the information, the more should he or she be cognitively involved with the issue. I estimated the time expended by an individual subject in seeking and processing the given information, measured in seconds (*search time*).

A proper technique to measure the extent to which individuals committed themselves to acquire new information available from the environment was hard to come by. It is not surprising that my measure of cognitive engagement with new information is among the few used. Lau and Redlawsk examine the decision rules employed by voters, measuring the information search undertaken during a simulated campaign. They contend that “particular information search patterns imply specific decision rules and can be identified by three key search process measures” (Redlawsk 2004; see also Lau 1995; 2003; Lau and Redlawsk 2001a, 2001b). The three key search process measures are *depth of search* (the time subjects spent searching for information, the amount of available relevant information actually considered, the amount of distinct attributes considered, and the amount of alternatives (candidates) considered), the *comparability of alternatives* under consideration (the extent to which a voter gathers the same information about all relevant candidates), and the *sequence of search* (the order in which information is accessed).

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<sup>23</sup> Social desirability bias refers to “systematic error in self-report measures resulting from the desire of respondents to avoid embarrassment and project a favorable image to others” (Fisher 1993, 303)

Among the three key search process measures, the *depth of search*, which can be deep or shallow, indicates more or less the cognitive effort to seek and process the given information. In *depth of search*, Lau and Redlawsk focus on the amount of the information considered, assuming that the more the amount of the information considered, the deeper or more comprehensive the information seeking. In this regard, Lau and Redlawsk's measure of *depth of search* is compatible with my measure of cognitive engagement, *search time*.

The two measures, *depth of search* and *search time*, have different strategies to estimate cognitive engagement, focusing on the amount of the information contacted and the time spent in processing the information, respectively. Of course, the two measures are interdependent or covary: The longer the time for seeking the information, the more the information considered. Indeed, the amount of information considered and the time spent are statistically significantly correlated (Pearson  $r = 0.717$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) in my data.<sup>24</sup> The question is which one can better identify who actually gets the information. Only people who in fact acquire the information can use it in forming and changing their political evaluations. The measure based on the amount of the information contacted, whatever its other virtues, does not do a good job of discriminating “acquisition” of information. Acquisition of information requires not only contacting with the information but also attending to the information. And the

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<sup>24</sup> More precisely, correlation coefficient of the two variables in Experiment 1 is 0.735 and that in Experiment 2 is 0.704. Both are statistically significant at  $p < 0.000$ . Descriptive statistics show that participants in Experiment 1 viewed 12.06 pages on average out of 48 pages, spending 8'28" (read 8 minutes and 28 seconds), and participants in Experiment 2 viewed 9.04 pages on average out of 24 pages, spending 7'51".

latter can best be measured by the time spent in seeking and processing the information. Thus researchers who rely on the measure based on the amount of the information contacted are likely to understate the impact of acquisition of the information on individuals' opinion formation.

Now let me turn to discuss another aspect of cognitive engagement, the type of information considered. Individuals who adopt systematic and central information processing pay attention to information content or the factual information; while individuals who take the heuristic and peripheral information processing rely on rules of thumb and global belief systems, such as heuristics, stereotypes, schemas, or the partisan information (Chaiken 1987; Chen and Chaiken 1999; Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Then, the type of information accessed by subjects when they were free to choose the information that they wanted to acquire or they thought they lacked is another critical characteristic of cognitive engagement. I estimated the type of information considered by an individual subject in seeking and processing the given information, measured in percent of the partisan information (*type of information*).

### The Dependent Variable in Experiment 2

The dependent variable in Experiment 2 is how subjects understand affirmative action programs. Affirmative action has been, and is, one of the most controversial policy issues in the United States, and there have been, and are, many definitions and understandings of it (Pennington and Hastie 1986; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Gamson 1992; Levi and Fried 1994). Indeed, contrary to

popular discourse that likely treats affirmative action in blanket terms, there seems to be no single concept of affirmative action that is currently being held in political circles and among ordinary citizens. Rather, supporters and opponents of affirmative action are in many cases arguing about very different, and ultimately incompatible, programs (Reyna et al. 2005; Steeh and Krysan 1996). To ask survey respondents whether to support or oppose affirmative action is to leave indeterminate what the respondent is in fact responding to.

Reflecting this complex situation, survey researchers have varied question wordings and contextual conditions in which affirmative action programs are applied in their attempts to capture public opinion on affirmative action.<sup>25</sup> They find that the variations in question wordings and contextual conditions influences overall support for affirmative action policy (Stoker 1998; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Hochschild 2000; Steeh and Krysan 1996). Little research, however, has been devoted to directly exploring what citizens think of appropriate applications of affirmative action programs (see Reyna et al. 2005).

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<sup>25</sup> Sears and his colleagues measure respondents' reactions to a single item/wording, "affirmative action." Sniderman, Crosby, and Howell (2000) use the series of National Election Studies (NES) questions, which include the word "preferences" for the query about jobs and (in some years) the word "quota" for the query about college admissions. Sniderman (Sniderman and Piazza 1993) uses the word "quota" in the question about admissions and the phrase "law to ensure that a certain number of federal contracts go to minority contractors" in the question about set-asides in his 1986 Race and Politics Survey. His 1991 Race and Politics Study (Sniderman and Carmines 1997) asks "if companies should be required to give a certain number of jobs to blacks." Finally, Stoker (1998) varied the circumstances in which racial quotas in hiring and college admission are to be implemented. In "context-free" condition, the question was "do you think that large companies should be required to give certain number of jobs to blacks, or should the government stay out of this?" In "underrepresentation" context, the same question was put into the context like "there are some large companies where blacks are underrepresented" And in "discrimination" context, the same question was put into the context like "there are some large companies with employment policies that discriminate against blacks."

I measured how individuals understand affirmative action, asking the following question: what would you think is the best understanding of affirmative action programs? And, the response options:

- (1) = Correction of the effects of past discrimination (15.3% of respondents selected this option);
- (2) = Prohibition of future and current discrimination (25.3%);
- (3) = Promotion of diversity or inclusion (27.6%);
- (4) = Violation against the merit or desert principle (8.2%);
- (5) = Reverse discrimination against bystanders (11.8%); and
- (6) = Quota system (11.8%).

The six alternative understandings of affirmative action programs include the major political frames that have been or are prevalent in political communication (see Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Fine 1992; Summers 1995; also see, for a broad review, Hutchings and Valentino 2004).

Options of 1, 2 and 3 are liberal understandings of affirmative action programs (or are framed in liberal ways), and the options of 4, 5, and 6 are conservative understandings of affirmative action programs (or are framed in conservative ways). In the analysis, the options of 1, 2, and 3 were coded as 1 (= liberal understandings of affirmative action programs), and the options of 4, 5, and 6 were coded as 0 (=conservative understandings of affirmative action programs).

## **ONLINE EXECUTION OF EXPERIMENTS**

The two online experiments were executed. A survey questionnaire and a briefing document were provided via experimental website. From a participants' perspective, a web-based, online experiment reduces the inconvenience and

opportunity costs of participation. Subjects did not have to convene in a particular place at a particular time. Instead, subjects could carry out the experimental and survey tasks any time they wanted and anywhere an Internet-ready computer was available. In this regard, it is worth noting that face-to-face Deliberative Polling recently was converted to online Deliberative Polling (Iyengar et al. 2003). Iyengar et al. (2003) note that

the online process offers greatly improved metrics for determining exactly what the participants are doing, what aspects of the experimental treatment they are making use of, which parts of the briefing documents or the answers to questions they are reading. Hence online Deliberative Polling opens up new possibilities for understanding the mediators of the treatment effects (what exactly is causing the opinion changes), and whether there are inequalities in participation in specific aspects of the process (21).

My experiments share the same strengths/benefits as the online Deliberative Polling offers (I discuss the additional strengths of my experiments with reference to online Deliberative Polling in Appendix 4.C).

The process-tracing method generally provides subjects with the briefing documents about the issue at hand in matrix format<sup>26</sup> (Redlawsk 2001, 2002; Lau and Redlawsk 1992, 2002; Lau 1995). I provided subjects with the briefing documents in the website format as any websites on the Internet (see Appendix 4.B that presents the web sites used for the experiments to provide relevant information about affirmative action programs). Thus, my briefing documents must be user-friendly given that many people have become familiar with the web search for information seeking and gathering. I expect that this user-friendly

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<sup>26</sup> Matrix format refers to a table of  $m$  columns by  $n$  rows, in which each cell has a label of the information. Subjects can see the information by clicking the label in the cell of the table.



experimental setting leads to fewer unintended, instrumental errors than other experimental settings do.

On the other hand, there may be some problems associated with managerial supervision of the subjects' conduct in seeking and processing the given information during the experiments. One problem is *idling*, by which I mean inattentive or less attentive participation in the task of the information search while doing other things at the same time, like talking on the phone or listening to music, or intermittent computing, like stopping computing to take a break, go to the toilet, etc. This can be detrimental because measuring the time expended in information seeking is critical in testing the hypotheses. One way to control idling is to instruct subjects not to be idle when they are doing the experimental task, i.e., information seeking (although it is relatively permissible when they answer the survey questions). Another way is to look closely at the data collected to identify any idling time and, if any exists, do some data cleansing. For example, each web page consists of around 300 to 500 words, and it should not take more than, for instance, 5 minutes to read them all. Thus, if a participant spends more than 5 minutes on a web page, it can be considered idling. This kind of data cleansing or after experiment data adjustment is quite possible because the time span that each subject expended on each web page is recorded. I found that a few participants actually idled during the information session. After a close examination of the cases of idled information seeking, I dropped them from the data set. Therefore, the data that I analyzed is free from the measurement error related to idling in information seeking and processing.

Finally, heterogeneous individual conditions for the computing environment, like computer and network speed, and heterogeneous individual skills in web surfing also may matter because these influence the search time of each subject. However, the time span is not measured in milliseconds, but simply seconds. I believe there is no significant effect in terms of seconds because of slow computer or network speed or low levels of web-search skills. Overall, individual variation in information seeking depends reliably on theoretical factors rather than instrumental ones.

**TABLE 4.1. PARTICIPANT, MEAN OF SEARCH TIME, AND DATE OF EXPERIMENT**

	Participants	White Participants (%)	Mean of Search Time (Minutes'Seconds'')	Date of Experiment
<b>Experiment 1</b>				
Class 1	43	14 (32.6)	07'43''	May 5-14, 2005
Class 2	31	17 (54.8)	12'01''	May 1-5, 2005
Class 3	34	12 (35.3)	06'00''	May 5-14, 2005
Class 4	53	18 (34.0)	09'16''	May 1-11, 2005
Class 5	9	6 (66.7)	09'53''	May 1-7, 2005
Class 6	10	6 (60.0)	06'21''	May 5-14, 2005
Class 7	46	28 (60.9)	08'38''	October , 2005
Class 8	31	23 (74.2)	11'19''	October , 2005
Class 9	26	19 (73.1)	10'53''	October , 2005
Class 10	33	11 (33.3)	06'19''	October , 2005
Class 11	36	20 (55.6)	07'15''	October , 2005
Class 12	46	29 (63.0)	10'12''	October , 2005
Class 13	5	2 (40.0)	19'16''	July 1-7, 2005
Class 14	78	27 (34.6)	06'45''	July 1-7, 2005
Class 15	50	19 (38.0)	05'52''	July 6-7, 2005
Class 16	127	51 (40.2)	08'15''	July 1-7, 2005
Total	658	302 (45.9)	08'28''	
<b>Experiment 2</b>				
Class 1	85	39 (45.1)	07'20''	October , 2005
Class 2	51	24 (47.1)	08'53''	October , 2005
Class 3	149	66 (44.3)	07'39''	October , 2005
Class 4	122	48 (39.3)	08'02''	October , 2005
Total	407	177 (43.5)	07'51''	

*Notes:* Mean of *search time* is based on white participants.

**TABLE 4.2. SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS IN  
EXPERIMENT 1**

	N	%
<b>Party Identification</b>		
Democrat	71	39.2
Independent	35	19.3
Republican	75	41.4
<b>Political Ideology</b>		
Liberal	112	38.6
Moderate	104	35.9
Conservative	74	25.5
<b>Liberal/Conservative Understanding of Affirmative Action</b>		
Liberal View	196	71.0
Conservative View	80	29.0
<b>General Political Knowledge</b> (7 items; $\alpha = 0.409$ ): Mean = 5.45; Std. Dev. = 1.23		
<b>Race-Specific Knowledge</b> (7 items; $\alpha = 0.480$ ): Mean = 2.48; Std. Dev. = 1.63		
<b>Political Interest</b> (4 items; $\alpha = 0.710$ ): Mean = 2.46; Std. Dev. = 0.900		
<b>Affective Feelings toward Blacks</b> (Feeling Thermometer): Mean = 62.19; Std. Dev. = 28.57		
<b>Search Time:</b> Mean = 08'28" Std. Dev. = 11'16"		
<b>Log of Search Time:</b> Mean = 5.324; Std. Dev. = 1.485		

*Notes:* Entries are based on white participants.

**TABLE 4.3. SUMMARY OF SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS IN  
EXPERIMENT 2**

	Partisan Information Condition		Factual Information Condition	
	N	%	N	%
<b>White Sample Only</b>				
<b>Party Identification</b>				
Democrat	11	29.4	24	52.2
Independent	11	20.6	5	10.9
Republican	25	50.0	17	37.0
<b>Political Ideology</b>				
Liberal	31	34.4	33	32.9
Moderate	33	36.7	20	31.4
Conservative	26	28.9	26	30.8
<b>Liberal/Conservative Understanding of Affirmative Action</b>				
Liberal View	63	71.6	53	64.6
Conservative View	25	28.4	29	35.4
<b>General Political Knowledge</b> (7 items; $\alpha = 0.444$ )	Mean = 5.63; Std. Dev. = 1.26		Mean = 5.49; Std. Dev. = 1.15	
<b>Race-Specific Knowledge</b> (7 items; $\alpha = 0.490$ )	Mean = 2.18; Std. Dev. = 1.35		Mean = 3.29; Std. Dev. = 1.95	
<b>Political Interest</b> (4 items; $\alpha = 0.715$ )	Mean = 2.56; Std. Dev. = 0.87		Mean = 2.58; Std. Dev. = 0.85	
<b>Affective Feelings toward Blacks</b> (Feeling Thermometer)	Mean = 60.17; Std. Dev. = 24.67		Mean = 56.34; Std. Dev. = 32.36	
<b>Racism</b> (6 items; $\alpha = 0.760$ )	Mean = 17.539; Std. Dev. = 3.761		Mean = 17.957; Std. Dev. = 4.732	
<b>Search Time</b>	Mean = 06'55"; Std. Dev. = 08'48"		Mean = 08'52"; Std. Dev. = 10'49"	
<b>Log of Search Time</b>	Mean = 2.189; Std. Dev. = 0.637		Mean = 2.377; Std. Dev. = 0.692	

*Notes:* 1. Race-specific knowledge is significantly different in the partisan and the factual information conditions. ANOVA reveals  $F(1, 175) = 19.52, p < .0000$ .

2. Other variables are not significantly different between the two experimental groups.

3. Entries are based on white participants.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHO ACQUIRES WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION

Individuals' use of the information available from the environment may vary. Some individuals actively seek out new information and reflect on policy issues to perform judgmental tasks, while others just rely upon their global attitudes for judgmental tasks. Types of the information on which individuals rely also may vary. Some individuals refer to information shortcuts or partisan cues, while others count on non-partisan, or "encyclopedic," information for judgmental tasks. These postulations appear plausible, yet await empirical corroboration.

To estimate the variability in individuals' use of information, it is necessary to develop a methodology or technique that allows us to track down and record individuals' behavior of information seeking and processing while they are being exposed to information. Scholars have developed techniques for studying information-acquisition processing, which fall under the generic fabric of "process-tracing methodology" (Ford et al. 1989; Jacoby et al. 1987; Lau 1995; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b). Process-tracing methodology makes it possible to collect data on which information is considered and how long it is considered while the decision is being made. It helps us to identify the cognitive components in the formation of political judgments and thereby to draw practical implications for more informed citizenry.

My purpose in this chapter is to estimate the variability of individuals' use of new information in terms of time expended and type of information considered in information search and account for it. Based on original data collected from the experiment described in Chapter 4, I examine the extent to which white Americans expend time and effort to learn about the issues of race. I also examine the type of information that individuals prefer when they are free to choose it.

## **DATA AND MEASURES**

A total of 658 students at The University of Texas at Austin were recruited for this study from late September to mid-October of 2005. Among them, 302 (45.9%) were whites and 356 were non-whites and Hispanics. The following analyses focused solely on white participants. All the details of experimental design for this study were presented in Chapter 4.

### Dependent Measures

The dependent variable is the time expended by an individual subject in seeking and processing the given information, measured in seconds (*search time*). This measure is a proxy that estimates how much cognitive attention an individual subject paid to the issue at hand in seeking and processing the information. In the analysis, *search time* was log transformed, which corrects the skewed distribution into a normal one.

As another dependent variable, I measured the types of information an individual subject accessed when she was free to choose either the partisan or the factual information (*type of information*). *Type of information* was operationalized

as percent of the partisan information considered among all the information considered. It ranged from 0 (no partisan information considered) to 100 (only partisan information considered).

### Independent Variables

As independent variables, I included political predispositions, such as party identification, political ideology, political knowledge, and political interest. For these variables, I utilize the same standard question wordings as the NES tapped. I also included affective feelings toward blacks and views on affirmative action programs. Affective attitudes toward blacks were measured by the 100-point feeling thermometer toward blacks as used in the NES, where 0 means that respondents feel negatively towards blacks and 100 means that respondents feel positively towards blacks. And, views on affirmative action programs were initially measured with six answer opinions and then recoded 0 for liberal position and 1 for conservative position. A complete description of the question wordings of the independent variables is presented in the Appendix 5.A.

## **WHO ACQUIRES MORE INFORMATION**

I hypothesize that political and racial dispositions direct individuals either to actively seek information or to avoid engaged information seeking.

*Party Identification.* Party identification is an overarching frame by which people formulate political judgments. It also is a standing commitment when citizens try to make sense of the swirling confusions of politics (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989; Nie,



Verba, and Petrocik 1979; Page and Brody 1972; Rabinowitz and MacDonald 1989). In addition, according to the issue ownership theory, political parties own their policy issues. For instance, the Democratic Party is known as the party best able to deal with issues of education, welfare, and civil rights, whereas the Republican Party is generally considered the party most competent at handling foreign affairs, national defense, and crime (Petrocik 1996; Budge and Farlie 1983; see also Alesina 1988; Bowler 1990). Given the argument that race has been, and is, an issue owned by the Democratic Party and that party identification is a funnel in shaping policy judgments, it seems reasonable to expect that Democrats are more likely than Republicans and independents to have concerns about their own issue, affirmative action programs, and likely engage in information seeking about it.

*Political Ideology.* Many Americans do not truly understand what “liberal” and “conservative” means (Converse 1964; Kinder 1983; Neuman 1986; Smith 1989; Deli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Yet, “Americans think of politics in terms of groups, and liberals and conservatives are two such reference groups orienting politics for ordinary citizens” (Globetti 2002, 5; see also Hochschild 1981). It is quite safe to say, therefore, that although American citizens are not ideologues at all, many of them think of policy issues in ideological terms. Considering that racial issues have been characterized and framed by liberal ideology (Edsall and Edsall 1991; Carmines and Stimson 1989), liberals tend to care about the issues that belong to their turf while conservatives tend to less care about typical liberal issues.

*Affective Attitudes toward Blacks.* It is quite well established that positive affect can cue attention and motivate deeper information processing (and less heuristic processing) (see Taber 2003). Likewise, those who hold positive attitudes toward blacks are expected to pay more attention to racial issues and thus expend more time in seeking information about affirmative action programs. By the same token, those who hold negative attitudes toward blacks are expected to pay less attention to racial issues and thus expend less time in seeking information about affirmative action programs.

*Views on Affirmative Action Programs.* The theory of racism posits that policy preferences on racial issues can be explained mostly by anti-black attitudes (Sears et al. 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Federico and Sidanius 2002). That is, racial policy preferences are driven by gut-level feelings rather than by reasoned judgments based on a fair amount of relevant information (Carmines and Stimson 1989). If this theory holds, individuals who view affirmative action programs in conservative ways are less likely than those who view affirmative action programs in liberal ways to care about the issue by expending time and effort to learn about the issue.

*General Political Knowledge.* By general political knowledge I refer to the range of factual information about politics, which is stored in long-term memory. General political knowledge is a result of long-term interest and attention to politics as well as the opportunity to get involved in politics and the ability to understand the complexity of politics (Luskin 1987; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). According to Zaller (1992), cognitive engagement and political knowledge

(or Zaller's political awareness) are meant to convey the same thing. Furthermore, Zaller (1992) asserts that "persons who are knowledgeable about politics in general are habitually attentive to communications on most particular issues as well" (43). This assertion is rather speculative. Higher levels of general political knowledge may not necessarily make people more attentive to information. Those with higher levels of political knowledge may not feel it necessary to seek out more information because they already know a lot; and those with low levels of political knowledge may not feel it necessary to acquire information as they have never done so before. I test if those with higher levels of general political knowledge tend to expend more time in information seeking.

*Issue-relevant Knowledge.* Issue-relevant knowledge, or domain-specific knowledge, is a direct consequence of long-term interest in and attention to the specific issue. Issue-relevant knowledge plays a bigger role than in general political knowledge in predicting use of information on that issue. I expect the same results in issue-relevant knowledge as expected general political knowledge: those with higher levels of issue-relevant knowledge tend to expend more time in information seeking.

*Political Interest.* Many citizens do not care about politics. Citizen apathy may well be a rational allocation of limited resources (Downs 1957; Fiske and Taylor 1991). Given the cost of information acquisition and the paltry expected payoff of it, rational individuals do not expend cognitive effort to acquire political information. It is reasonable to expect, however, that differences in interest in politics induce variability in information acquisition (see Chaiken 1980; Petty and

Cacioppo 1981, 1986; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Price and Zaller 1993). That is, when people lack interest in politics, they do a minimal analysis of the policy issues and rely heavily on global beliefs or attitudes. They give up accuracy to avoid effort and stress. On the other hand, when people are interested in politics, they do the highest or optimal level of analysis of policy issues and may try to update their beliefs or attitudes by acquiring currently available information. All this having been said, I expect that levels of political interest will be responsible for levels of paying attention to relevant information. The more individuals are interested in politics, the more attention and time they expend to acquire relevant information.

#### The Determinants of *Search Time*

Let me begin with the descriptive statistics of my dependent variable, *search time*. Figure 5.1 shows that individuals' use of information in terms of *search time* varies, ranging from 00'03" (read 0 minute and 3 seconds) to 54'52", with a mean of 08'28", standard deviation of 11'16", and median of 03'34". It also shows that the distribution of *search time* is significantly skewed with a long right tail (Skewness = 1.789; Standard Error of Skewness = 0.144).<sup>27</sup>

The cumulative distribution of *search time*, as displayed in Figure 5.2, shows that 33% of participants expended less than 01'30", whereas 25% of participants expended more than 13'00". Thus, many participants were reluctant to

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<sup>27</sup> In general, a skewness value more than twice its standard error is taken to indicate a departure from symmetry.

care to know about the issue. But, on the other hand, among those who belonged to the top 25% in *search time*, information seeking exponentially increases.

Data also revealed that *search time* varies in terms of individual political predispositions. First, Republicans expended less time (06'24") than Democrats did (11'35"). The difference is statistically significant ( $t = 2.902, p = 0.004$ ). An analysis of variance reveals a statistically significant difference among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents ( $F(2, 181) = 4.035, p = 0.019$ ). Similarly, Conservatives expended significantly less time (05'41") than liberals (09'47") ( $t = 2.585, p = 0.011$ ) and moderates (09'30") did. The differences among conservatives, liberals, and moderates are also statistically significant ( $F(2, 276) = 3.317, p = 0.038$ ). Considering that affirmative action is a Democratic and liberal issue, it is not surprising that Democrats and liberals did want to know more about the issue than Republicans and conservatives did.

Second, general political knowledge is positively related to information seeking. As levels of general political knowledge increases, *search time* increases from 06'17" (for those in the bottom 25% on the scale of general political knowledge) to 06'46" (for those in between the bottom 25% and the bottom 50% on the same scale) to 09'39" (for those in between the top 25% and the top 50% on the same scale) and to 10'30" (for those in the top 25% on the same scale). Compared to those in the bottom 25% of general political knowledge, those with the top 25% of general political knowledge expended significantly more cognitive efforts in information seeking ( $t = -1.891, p = 0.061$ ). Therefore, data support the conventional notion that those who are politically knowledgeable want to acquire

more information. I found the same pattern between *search time* and race-specific knowledge. As levels of the race-specific knowledge change from low to high, *search time* increases from 07'47" to 08'46" to 08'56" (even though the difference is not statistically significant).

Third, individuals who viewed affirmative action programs in conservative ways expended less time (07'13") than those who viewed affirmative action programs in liberal ways (09'14"). Although this difference between the two groups is not statistically significant ( $t = 1.294$ ,  $p = 0.197$ ), this result shows that those who viewed affirmative action in liberal ways did feel they needed to expend cognitive efforts to learn more about the issue.

Fourth, those who held positive feelings toward blacks expended more time (09'21") in information seeking than those who held negative feelings toward blacks (07'34"), indicating that negative feelings toward blacks decrease cognitive efforts to understand the issue. This result, however, failed to reach statistical significance ( $t = 1.342$ ,  $p = 0.181$ ).

Finally, data shows that those with a low level of political interest searched a longer time (09'44") than those with a high level of political interest did (07'03"). The difference is statistically significant ( $t = 2.010$ ,  $p = 0.045$ ). This result is opposite to the notion that political interest motivates individuals to get involved more in information seeking.

Given these analyses, I ran a multivariate regression model, using ordinary least-squares, in order to estimate relative effects of the independent variables on

*search time*. Since the dependent variable is skewed,<sup>28</sup> thus neither symmetric, nor of normal distribution, I did a log transformation of it and thereby could reduce the skewness.<sup>29</sup> As the histogram in Figure 5.3 shows, *log of search time* is normal and symmetric. The functional form of the model to test the hypotheses is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Log of Search Time} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{Democrat} + \beta_2 * \text{Republican} + \beta_3 * \text{Liberal} \\ & + \beta_4 * \text{Conservative} + \beta_5 * \text{Political Knowledge} + \beta_6 * \text{Race-specific} \\ & \text{Knowledge} + \beta_7 * \text{Political Interest} + \beta_8 * \text{Affective Feelings toward Blacks} \\ & + \beta_9 * \text{Understandings of Affirmative Action} + u \end{aligned}$$

Where,  $\alpha$  is constant,  $\beta$ s are ordinary least-squares regression coefficients, and  $u$  is an error term; The dependent variable, *log of search time*, is a continuous variable, running from 1.10 to 8.32; and details of coding schemes for other variables are presented in Appendix 5.A.

Table 5.1 shows that the coefficient of Democrats is positive and significant, indicating that Democrats are more likely than Republicans and Independents to expend time in information seeking. The coefficient of *political knowledge* is also positive and significant, suggesting higher levels of political knowledge facilitate more cognitive efforts to acquire and process the information. And, the coefficient of *political interest* is negative and significant, suggesting that higher levels of political interest discourage cognitive effort to acquire and process the information.

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<sup>28</sup> Skewed data are not bad data. They are simply data that create a few complications because the distribution of likely measurements is asymmetrical and less convenient for statistical analysis.

<sup>29</sup> When a positively skewed distribution is log-transformed, the skewness is reduced. This is a norm when analyzing skewed data.

To sum up, first, individuals vary in their using incoming, relevant information when they are free to search it and learn about the issue at hand. Although it is known that many individuals do not care to acquire incoming information about the issue, evidence provided here illustrated that many individuals actually expended time in seeking information about affirmative action programs. Second, the results of the analyses generally supported the expectation that cognitive engagement is a function of individual motivation and cognitive ability. More knowledgeable individuals are willing to become more informed by expending cognitive effort in acquiring incoming, new information. Third, the results supported the expectation drawn from issue ownership theory (Petrocik 1996). Given that affirmative action is a Democratic issue, Democrats are significantly more motivated to want to acquire more information about affirmative action programs.

Fourth, contrary to the expectation, *political ideology* failed to reach statistical significance, and the coefficient of *political interest* showed negative sign. I will discuss this issue later in the chapter.

### **WHO PREFERS PARTISAN INFORMATION TO FACTUAL INFORMATION**

Examining the question posed above, I begin with the assumption that *search time* and *type of information* are interdependent. More precisely, I predict that *log of search time* will significantly account for variation in the type of information considered. That is, the more cognitive effort individuals expend in information seeking, the more factual information they access. According to dual-



process theory, the extent to which individuals expend in seeking and processing information is related to the type of information they prefer; and individuals who cognitively involve themselves in the issue at hand are more motivated to be accurate, thus seeking the objective, factual information (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Drawing on theory, I predict that those who expend more time in seeking information will be likely to access factual, objective information more than partisan information. Therefore, as was found in Study 1, Democrats, liberals, those who viewed affirmative action in liberal ways, and those who hold positive feeling toward blacks, and those who are more knowledgeable are likely to prefer factual information to partisan information, whereas Republicans, conservatives, those who viewed affirmative action in conservative ways, those who held negative feelings toward blacks, and those who are less knowledgeable are likely to prefer partisan information to factual information. Finally, regardless of individual difference variables, participants are expected to prefer the partisan information to the factual information, according to heuristics theory (Simon 1985; Lupia 1994, 2000; Lupia, McCubbins, and Popkin 2001).

#### The Determinants of *Type of Information*

Note that the participants in the experiment were exposed to two types of information, partisan information and factual information, and asked to choose the information they wanted to probe. The briefing documents consisted of 44 web pages, of which 20 were the factual information and 24 were the partisan information. Thus, if subjects randomly choose information, the probability that

they will hit factual information is 46% (20 out of 44), and the probability that they will hit partisan information is 54% (24 out of 44). The analyses revealed that participants accessed 47.8% of the factual information and 52.2% of the partisan information. This is not significantly different from the expected probability, indicating that individuals did not significantly prefer partisan information to factual information.

Analyses also revealed significant variations in the preferred type of information in terms of political predispositions. First, partisan independents accessed partisan information more than Democrats. Fifty-seven percent of the information that partisan independents accessed was partisan information, whereas 44% of the information that Democrats accessed was partisan information. The difference in their access to partisan information between Democrats and partisan independents is statistically significant ( $t = -1.871, p = 0.032$ ). Also, Democrats were more likely than Republicans to access factual information ( $t = -2.289, p = 0.024$ ). The difference in their access to partisan information among Democrats, Republicans, and partisan independents is also statistically significant ( $F(2, 181) = 3.166, p = 0.045$ ). Similarly, liberals favored factual information (52% of the information accessed by liberals was factual information) more than conservatives (45% of the information accessed by conservatives was factual information), although the difference is not statistically significant ( $t = 2.062, p = 0.228$ ).

Second, no significant difference in the preferred type of information is found in terms of general political knowledge. In contrast, a significant difference

is found in terms of race-specific knowledge. Those with relatively low levels of race-specific knowledge favored partisan information (58% was partisan information) more than those with relatively high levels of race-specific knowledge (46% was partisan information). The difference between the two groups is statistically significant ( $t = 2.357, p = 0.020$ ). This result indicates that lack of issue-specific knowledge leads to significantly more reliance on partisan information, and that high levels of issue-specific knowledge boost more acquisition of factual information.

Third, among the information accessed by those with relatively low levels of political interest, 51% was partisan information. For those with relatively high levels of political interest, 54% was partisan information. The difference is not statistically significant. Fourth, for those who understood affirmative action programs in conservative ways, partisan information was 53%, while among the information accessed by those who understood affirmative action in liberal ways, partisan information was 51%. The difference is not statistically significant. Finally, among the information accessed by those who held negative feelings toward blacks, 53% was partisan information, and among the information accessed by those who held positive feelings toward blacks, partisan information was 51%. The difference is not statistically significant.

To account for the relative impact of the variables on type of information an individual participant favored, I ran a regression model, using the ordinary least-squares method. I tested the effects of the same variables incorporated in the previous model, adding one more variable, *log of search time*, with different

dependent variable, *percent partisan information accessed*. The functional form of the model is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Percent Partisan Information Accessed} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{Democrat} + \beta_2 * \text{Republican} \\ & + \beta_3 * \text{Liberal} + \beta_4 * \text{Conservative} + \beta_5 * \text{Political Knowledge} + \beta_6 * \text{Race-} \\ & \text{specific Knowledge} + \beta_7 * \text{Political Interest} + \beta_8 * \text{Affective Feelings} \\ & \text{toward Blacks} + \beta_9 * \text{Understandings of Affirmative Action} + \beta_{10} * \text{Log of} \\ & \text{Search Time} + u \end{aligned}$$

Where,  $\alpha$  is constant,  $\beta$ s are ordinary least-squares regression coefficients, and  $u$  is an error term; The dependent variable, *percent partisan information accessed*, is percent of the partisan information accessed among all the information accessed, running from 0 (no partisan information was accessed) to 100 (only the partisan information was accessed, theoretically; *log of search time* is the same variable that is used as the dependent variable in Study 1; and other variables are coded in the same way as in Study 1. Details of coding schemes for other variables are presented in Appendix 5.A.

Table 5.2 displays the results of the test, in which the coefficients of the variable for *democrats*, *affective feelings toward blacks*, and *log of search time* are statistically significant at  $p < .081$  level (two-tailed test). The results support the hypothesis that Democrats, those who expended much time in information seeking, and those who held positive feelings toward blacks would be likely to access factual information more than partisan information.

In sum, the results suggest that partisan information was not always preferred. There exist significant differences in the type of information that individuals choose to consider. Preferences over the type of information vary as a function of political partisanship, affective feelings toward blacks, and cognitive

engagement in incoming information. Thus, contrary to the general expectation, the case for the preferences over the partisan information is not always warranted.

## **DISCUSSION**

This chapter set out to examine how an individual uses incoming, relevant information regarding affirmative action programs. Before presenting a summary of my findings and accounts of them, I feel compelled to discuss some lingering concerns. First, if there is to be a meaningful theory of how individuals use information, studying one issue domain will not suffice. We still know little about how individuals use information across the diverse issues and under different circumstances. Further research on the nature of information processing and acquisition across diverse policy issues is needed.

Second, my data, consisting of college students, is not a representative sample of adult population. I admit that generalizing the findings reported from the specific sample that was studied here to a larger population is risky. However, there is no reasonable or empirical ground to believe that information seeking and policy judgments by college students are significantly different from those of a larger population.

Despite the limitations imposed by the data, four major findings stand out. First, although I cannot specify with much precision the extent to which an individual generally uses new information to make policy judgments, the evidence provided here showed that many individuals are able and willing to engage in active information seeking to warrant a deeper understanding of the

issue at hand. The assumption of individuals' minimal use of new information is not supported by my data. More precisely, under the experimental condition where relevant information is available without much costs, many participants are proactive information seekers instead of cognitive misers. As dual-process theories suggest, individuals can be flexible information seekers as a function of individual and contextual differences (Chaiken and Trope 1999; Eagly and Chaiken 1993).

Second, judging from the findings with regard to the preferred type of information that individuals accessed, I can safely say that partisan information is not always preferred over factual information. Participants under the experimental condition, where both the partisan and the factual information are available at the same information costs, showed no significant difference in their access to the different types of information. It has been thought that ordinary citizens rely a great deal upon partisan information. This may be not because they favor partisan information, but because partisan information is just more available than factual information. In other words, citizen's reliance on partisan information is conditional, but not invariable.

The finding provided here suggests that individuals may be flexible in adopting a strategy to acquire relevant information. That is, under normal conditions where acquiring factual information is more costly and partisan information is more available, many citizens may rely on partisan information instead of paying higher costs for acquiring factual information. However, under the condition where both the partisan and the factual information are available at

the same information costs, many individuals are willing to acquire factual information. Furthermore, the finding suggests that the choice of relying more on partisan information or factual information is a function of preexisting attitudes toward the issue at hand. That is, positive positions or attitudes toward the information object induce more reliance on factual information, while negative attitudes toward the information object induce more reliance on partisan information.

Third, the type of information that one favors is a function of how much cognitive effort one expends. The more time spent seeking information, the more likely a person is to rely on factual information. Therefore, the more knowledgeable and the less knowledgeable have different strategies in seeking information in terms of time spent gathering information and the type of information they favored. Given this finding, it is hard to imagine that less knowledgeable individuals can successfully emulate the behaviors of more knowledgeable individuals through a mere exposure to a few information cues.

Finally, individuals vary in their use of incoming, relevant information and the types of information they favor even when it comes to race issues. Individuals are not unvaryingly indifferent being more informed about race issues. Many individuals willingly learn about new information even when it comes to race issues.

**TABLE 5.1. EFFECTS OF POLITICAL AND RACIAL  
PREDISPOSITIONS ON LOG OF SEARCH TIME**

<b>Dependent Variable is Log of Search Time</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><math>t</math></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	0.155*	1.996	0.047
<b>Republican</b>	0.030	0.396	0.692
<b>Liberal</b>	-0.033	-0.395	0.693
<b>Conservative</b>	-0.089	-1.142	0.255
<b>Political Knowledge</b>	0.181**	2.642	0.009
<b>Race-Specific Knowledge</b>	0.046	0.700	0.485
<b>Political Interest</b>	-0.146*	-2.069	0.040
<b>Affective Feelings toward Blacks</b>	0.075	1.141	0.255
<b>Support Affirmative Action</b>	0.035	0.506	0.613
<b>Constant</b>		7.512	0.000
<b>Number of cases</b>	148		
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.051		

*Notes:* 1. Entries are standardized ordinary least-squares regression coefficients and t-ratios. 2. The dependent variable is a continuous variable, running from 1.10 to 8.32. 3. The positive sign of a coefficient indicates that participants are more likely to expend time in seeking information.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ . Significant tests are two-tailed.



**TABLE 5.2. EFFECTS OF POLITICAL AND RACIAL  
PREDISPOSITIONS ON % PARTISAN INFORMATION  
ACCESSED**

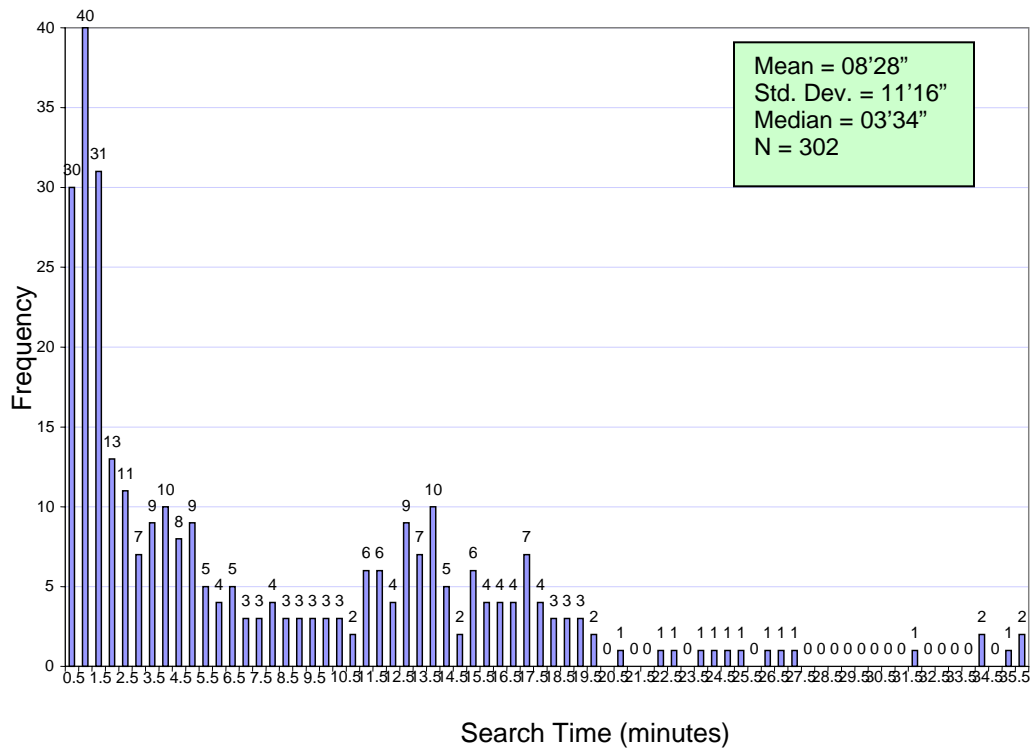
<b>Dependent Variable is % Partisan Information Accessed</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b><math>t</math></b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Democrat</b>	-0.137 <sup>+</sup>	-1.755	0.081
<b>Republican</b>	0.029	0.385	0.701
<b>Liberal</b>	-0.013	-0.158	0.874
<b>Conservative</b>	-0.061	-0.779	0.437
<b>Political Knowledge</b>	0.013	0.189	0.851
<b>Race-Specific Knowledge</b>	-0.091	-1.375	0.170
<b>Political Interest</b>	0.115	1.615	0.108
<b>Affective Feelings toward Blacks</b>	-0.136*	-2.078	0.039
<b>Support Affirmative Action</b>	0.008	0.112	0.911
<b>Log of Search Time</b>	-0.158*	-2.345	0.020
<b>Constant</b>		5.145	0.000
<b>Number of cases</b>	148		
<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.095		

*Notes:* 1. Entries are standardized ordinary least-squares regression coefficients and t-ratios.

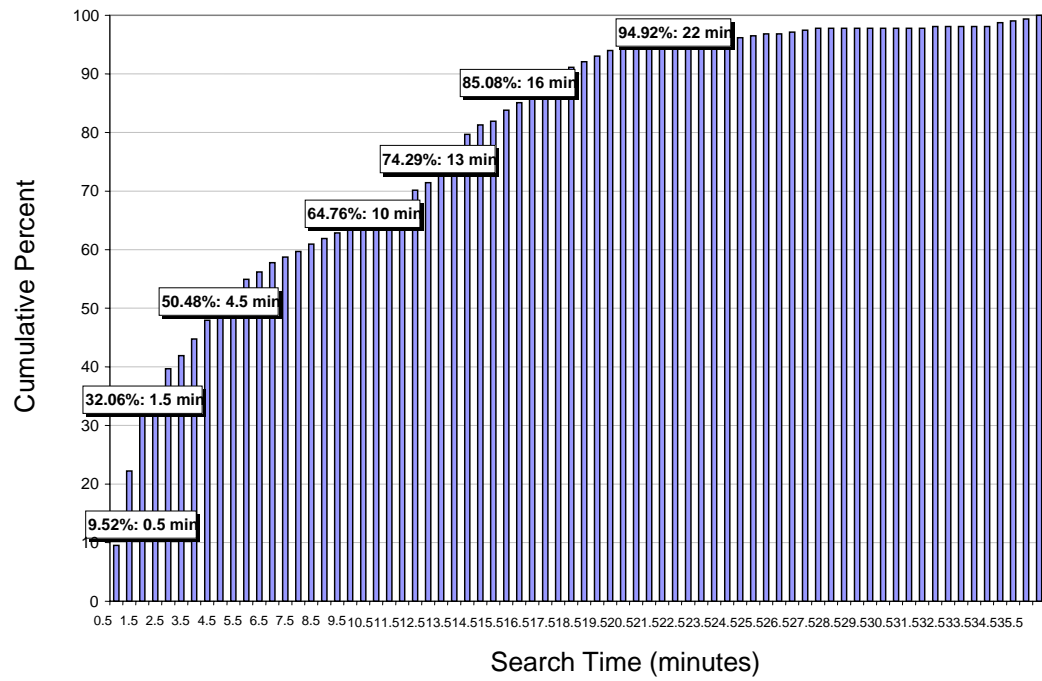
2. The dependent variable is a continuous variable, running from 0 (no partisan information is accessed) to 100 (only partisan information is accessed). 3. A positive sign of a coefficient indicates that participants are more likely to access the partisan information.

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ . Significant tests are two-tailed.

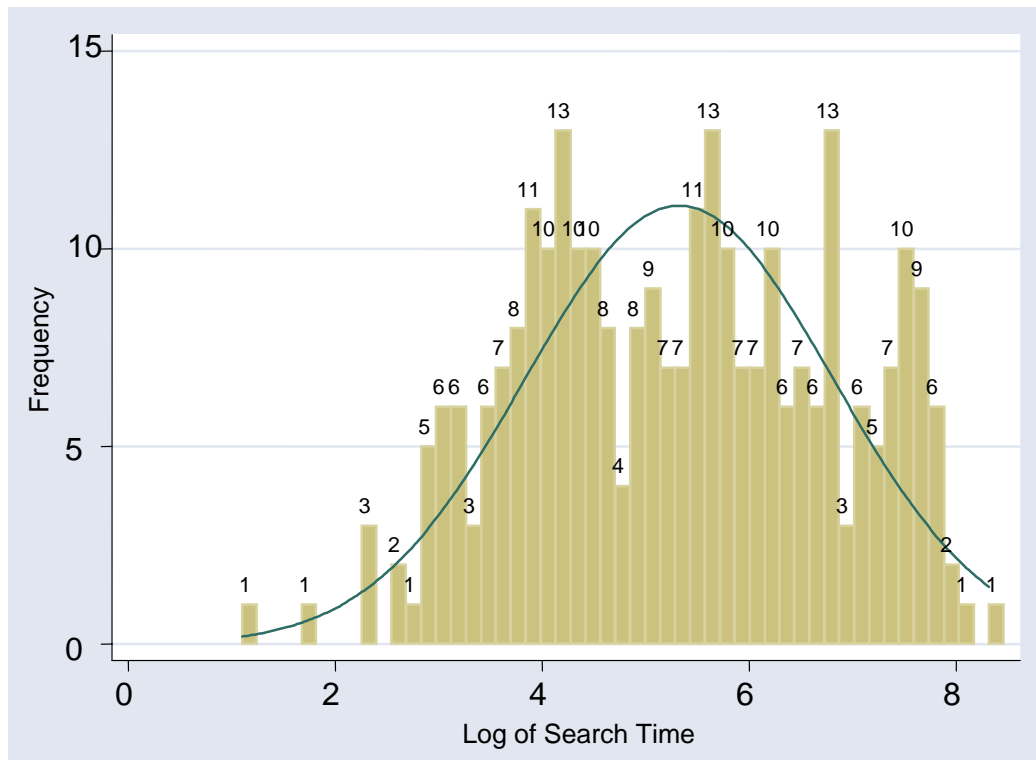
**FIGURE 5.1. HISTOGRAM OF SEARCH TIME**



**FIGURE 5.2. CUMULATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF SEARCH TIME**



**FIGURE 5.3. HISTOGRAM OF LOG OF SEARCH TIME**



## CHAPTER SIX

### HOW ACQUISITION OF NEW INFORMATION AFFECTS POLICY JUDGMENTS

A large body of research in political science has evolved around knowledge (i.e., awareness, sophistication, expertise, and constraint), indicating that “information,” in the sense of information already held, does matter: better informed individuals (i.e., more knowledgeable individuals) have noticeably different policy and voting preferences (Luskin 1987, 2002; Zaller 1992; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Bartels 1996; Althaus 1998; see also Converse 1964). In another way, “new” information available from the current environment also matters. New information that primes or frames an individual’s considerations can alter her policy and candidate preferences (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Nelson 2004; Druckman 2004; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Iyengar 1991). Also new information that increases an individual’s knowledge level can alter his policy preferences (Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002; Iyengar, Luskin, and Fishkin 2004; see also Fishkin 1991; Mansbridge 1983). The theoretical presumption underlying these studies is that individuals alter or reinforce their initial considerations if they know more by acquiring new information.

While the effects of information stored in memory have been a subject that has captured tremendous scholarly attention, there have been relatively few direct inquiries into the effects of new information on policy judgments (see Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001a, 2001b; Redlawsk 2004; Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody

1997; Barker and Hansen 2005). As demonstrated in Chapter 5, individuals' acquisition of new information varies in terms of time expended in seeking the given information and types of the information counted on. Some respondents proactively sought out the given information, but others did not; some referred to factual information, while others relied on partisan information. Left unexplored are consequences of different levels of cognitive engagement in political judgments.

Given this finding, I examine three questions in this chapter. First, I explore how variability in cognitive engagement affects an individual's policy views of affirmative action programs. Next, I examine how different types of information counted on during information seeking and processing affect policy views of affirmative action. Finally, I examine how cognitive engagement with new information shapes policy views of affirmative action programs, vying against the effect of anti-black attitudes.

This chapter is organized in five sections starting with method and procedure, followed by data and measures, two sections of empirical analyses, and finally discussion.

## **METHOD AND PROCEDURE**

The method and procedure of the experiment for this study was described in Chapter 4. Here, I will just briefly underline the essential characteristics of the experiment.

Participants in the experiment were asked to first learn the issue by acquiring the information they chose to learn and then answered a questionnaire. Participants were randomly assigned to either set of partisan information or factual information. All other conditions were the same between the two groups. Thus, the basic experimental design was to compare policy views on affirmative action programs of otherwise similar groups of participants except acquiring different kinds of information. In addition, the experiment estimated individual differences in the time spent in information seeking.

## **DATA AND MEASURES**

A total of 407 students at The University of Texas at Austin were recruited for this study from late September to mid-October of 2005. Among the participants, 177 (44%) were whites and 230 were non-whites and Hispanics. The analyses in this chapter focus solely on the white samples.<sup>30</sup> Ninety-two participants in the partisan information condition 85 participants in the factual information were analyzed. The distribution of participants was presented in Table 4.2. My convenience sample is not a representative one, but the sample does contain reasonable variation along several important attitudinal dimensions. A complete description of the question wordings and coding schemes of each variable I describe in the following is presented in Appendix 5.A.

### **Dependent Measure**

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<sup>30</sup> A discussion of why analysis is limited to white Americans is in Chapter 5, pp. 109-110.

Affirmative action has been, and is, an extremely controversial issue, and citizens differ in what they think affirmative action is (Hastie 1986; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Gamson 1992; Levi and Fried 1994). Indeed, the debate over affirmative action is typically waged in terms of symbols and slogans, such as “quota,” “racism,” “a color-blind society,” “reverse discrimination,” and “diversity.” As I discussed in Chapter 4 (pp. 95-97), I provided the six alternative response options that have been or are prevalent in political communication (see Gamson 1992; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Fine 1992; Summers 1995; also see, for a broad review, Hutchings and Valentino 2004). In the analysis, the six alternative response options were coded in dichotomous way: options of 1, 2, and 3 were coded as 1 (= liberal understandings of affirmative action programs), and the options of 4, 5, and 6 were coded as 0 (=conservative understandings of affirmative action programs).

### Independent Measures

*Search Time.* My key independent variable is *search time*. A discussion of how this variable was measured is in Chapter 5. Figure 6.1 displays the distribution of *search time* from Experiment 2, showing a distribution that is skewed with a long right tail. This result indicates that *search time* varies especially for those who expended relatively longer time in information seeking.

*Type of Information.* Subjects were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups, allowing me to control the information to which subjects were exposed. Thus, the variable of *type of information* is dichotomous—partisan



information or factual information, indicating type of information that subjects sought and processed.

*Symbolic Racism.* For this measure, I follow the one mostly used in previous studies. Anti-black attitudes were measured based on the racial resentment scale from National Election Studies (see Kinder and Sanders 1996). This variable consisted of six items, and each item is 5-point scale from 1 for the lowest racial resentment to 5 for the highest racial resentment. A complete description of the question wordings of six items and coding schemes is presented in Appendix 5.A.

*Other Control Variables.* Party identification, political ideology, political knowledge, and political interest were measured as critical ingredients in individuals' understanding of affirmative action programs. For these variables, the standard question wordings as used in the National Election Studies were used. A complete description of the question wordings and coding schemes of these variables is presented in Appendix 5.A.

## **INFORMATION SEARCH AND POLICY JUDGMENTS**

Studies show that even mere exposure to a small number of information shortcuts is sufficient to compensate uninformed individuals for their chronic lack of political knowledge (Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Popkin 1991). Voters, for instance, do not need what Lupia and McCubbins (1998) called encyclopedic information to make solid, or competent, electoral choices. Lupia (1994) argues that

the availability of certain types of information cues allows voters to use their limited resources efficiently while influencing electoral outcomes in ways that they would have if they had taken the time and effort necessary to acquire encyclopedic information (72).

More generally,

by forming simple and effective strategies about what information to use and how to use it, people can make the same decisions they otherwise would if they were expert” (Lupia and McCubbins 1998, 9; also see Payne, Bettman, and Johnson 1993).

Although this line of argument has been prevalent in political science, evidence from social psychology indicates that information shortcuts or cues based on partisan frames often fail to exert a detectable judgmental impact when individuals exert systematic processing of substantial amounts of information, and that the factual information based on the logical content of a message plays a bigger role in shaping social judgments when individuals are cognitively engaged with the factual information (Petty, Cacioppo, and Kasmer 1988; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Chaiken and Trope 1999).

Drawing on these theories, I expect that the seeking and processing of factual information, but not that of partisan information, suppresses racial criteria<sup>31</sup> and promotes non-racial attitudes toward affirmative action. I further expect that the tendency of decreased effect of racial criteria on views on affirmative action becomes clearer as cognitive engagement with the information increases. More precisely, I hypothesize that participants who expend a considerable amount of cognitive efforts to understand race issues by acquiring factual information are more likely to consciously process information and thus

control their racial resentments. It follows that the greater cognitive engagement with factual information tends to lead individuals to be less influenced by their racial predispositions.

### The Effect of the Partisan versus the Factual Information

The data shows that among respondents who answered survey questions without information seeking (participants in Experiment 1), 71% viewed affirmative action programs in liberal ways. Meanwhile, 68.2% of respondents who sought out and processed the information before making their policy judgments on affirmative action programs (participants in Experiment 2) viewed affirmative action programs in liberal ways. More precisely, 64.6% of participants in the factual information condition viewed affirmative action in liberal ways; and 71.6% of participants in the partisan information condition did.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveals that there are no statistically significant differences in the views of affirmative action programs before and after information seeking and regardless of the type of information considered.<sup>32</sup> No difference between pre- and post-treatment views of affirmative action programs might be due to failure in the randomization. There is no reason to believe, however, that the experimental and control groups were “not equal” before the experimental treatment. Another possibility of no difference between

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<sup>31</sup> By racial criteria, I refer to “thoughts and feelings that are far less sublime—racially charged feelings of resentment, bigoted and stereotypical beliefs about blacks, and the belief that racial inequality has arisen or persisted because of the failings of blacks themselves” (Stoker 1998, 137).

pre- and post-treatment measures is due to null effect of information seeking on policy views. Or, this result is just about group difference without taking into account individual difference driven by different level of information acquisition. In other words, there is a possibility that individuals' different levels of information acquisition can account for different views of affirmative action programs. For instance, those who expended relative more time in seeking information might have different policy views from those who did not have an opportunity to seek information (participants in control group) and those who did not expend much time in seeking information. Similarly, those who expended relatively more time in seeking factual (or partisan) information might have different policy views from those who did not have an opportunity to seek information and those who expended relatively less time in seeking partisan (or factual) information.

With that said, I begin a close examination of the effect of the different types of information by statistically equating the two experimental groups.<sup>33</sup> For this I did multivariate analysis, undertaking two separate probit models for each of the two information conditions. I regressed individual differences upon views on affirmative action for those who accessed partisan information and for those who accessed factual information, respectively. With this model, I estimated the

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<sup>32</sup> The differences among the control group (in Experiment 1) and the two experimental groups are *not* statistically significant ( $F(2, 443) = 0.68, p = 0.507$ ), and the differences between the two experimental groups are *not* statistically significant, either ( $F(1, 168) = 0.94, p = 0.333$ ).

<sup>33</sup> Between the two experimental groups, differences exist in terms of *party identification* ( $F(1, 91) = 5.97, p = 0.017$ ) and *political knowledge* ( $F(1, 116) = 3.54, p = 0.062$ ). Yet no differences exist in terms of *symbolic racism* ( $F(1, 144) = 0.35, p = 0.554$ ), *log of search time* ( $F(1, 134) =$

different effects of the independent variables on views on affirmative action in two different information conditions, controlling the variance in sample characteristics. The functional form of the model was as follows.

$$\Pr (Y_i = 1) = \Phi (\beta_1 * \text{Party Identification}_i + \beta_2 * \text{Political Ideology}_i + \beta_3 * \text{Political Knowledge}_i + \beta_4 * \text{Political Interest}_i + \beta_5 * \text{Symbolic Racism}_i + \beta_6 * \text{Log of Search Time}_i)$$

(1)

Where dependent variable is  $i$ 's liberal understandings of affirmative action, which is coded as 1;  $\Phi$  is the standard normal cumulative distribution; and coding schemes for the variables incorporated are presented in Appendix 5.A.

In this model, the focus lies in the role that *log of search time*<sup>34</sup> plays in the different information conditions. I predict that *log of search time* plays a significantly bigger role in the factual information condition than in the partisan information condition. Those who seek and process the factual information are more likely than those who seek and process the partisan information to view affirmative action in liberal ways if they all spent a fair amount of time to acquire information.

The results presented in Table 6.1 show that my expectation is correct; *log of search time* is positive and significant in the factual information condition, but negative and insignificant in the partisan information condition. It is interesting to note that *general political knowledge* reaches statistical significance in the partisan information condition, but not in the factual information condition. Under

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2.72,  $p = 0.102$ ), *political ideology* ( $F(1, 167) = 0.07$ ,  $p = 0.791$ ), and *political interest* ( $F(1, 147) = 0.02$ ,  $p = 0.888$ ).

<sup>34</sup> As I mentioned before, to reduce the skewness of *search time*, I log-transformed it. This is a recommended method of analysis for skewed data.

both conditions, *symbolic racism* fails to reach statistical significance, indicating that variation in understanding affirmative action is better explained by log of search time and general political knowledge than by symbolic racism.

Based on Model (1), I computed changes in the predicted probability of liberal understanding of affirmative action at varying levels of *log of search time*, *general political knowledge*, and *symbolic racism* in each experimental condition, holding other variables at their mean levels. First, Figure 6.2 (a) shows that *log of search time* has a considerable impact on the probability of liberal understanding of affirmative action in the factual information condition, but not in the partisan information condition. Those who sought and processed the factual information are 82.3% more likely to view affirmative action in liberal ways as their time expended in information seeking increases from the minimum level to the maximum level, while those who sought and processed the partisan information are 14.8% less likely to view affirmative action in liberal ways as their time expended in information seeking changes from the minimum level to the maximum level. This finding suggests that the factual and the partisan information function in different ways, depending on the extent to which an individual expends time in information seeking. Acquisition of factual information significantly facilitates liberal understanding of affirmative action, while elaboration, or acquisition, of partisan information slightly facilitates conservative understanding of affirmative action.

Second, Figure 6.2 (b) shows that *general political knowledge* significantly boosts conservative understanding of affirmative action in the

partisan information condition, while it hardly affects understandings of affirmative action in the factual information condition. For those who hold the minimum level of *general political knowledge*, *type of information* they sought and processed does not matter. But, for those who hold the maximum level of *general political knowledge*, *type of information* made a significant difference in understanding affirmative action. Therefore, the factual and the partisan information function in different ways, depending on the extent to which an individual possesses knowledge about politics in general.

Finally, as displayed in Figure 6.2 (c), *symbolic racism* facilitates conservative understanding of affirmative action in both information conditions. The effects of the partisan and the factual information on liberal understanding of affirmative action do not significantly vary as a function of *symbolic racism*.

To summarize, *type of information* matters in formulating policy judgments. The effect of the factual information depends on one's level of cognitive engagement, while the effect of the partisan information depends on one's level of knowledge. The evidence provided here supports the proposition of dual-process theory. That is, the impact of an individual's cognitive engagement on policy judgments is related to what information she seeks and processes. Different levels of elaboration of the factual information make a significant difference in policy judgments on affirmative action, while different levels of elaboration of the partisan information do not make a significant difference in policy judgments on affirmative action.

## The Effect of Cognitive Engagement

The analysis now turns to the effects of cognitive engagement. Table 6.2 showed that the more time participants spend seeking information, the more they were likely to reach liberal understanding of affirmative action. The mean of *search time* for those who understood affirmative action in liberal ways is 09'14", while that for those who understood affirmative action in conservative ways is 04'53". The difference is statistically significant ( $F(1,168) = 14.26, p = 0.0002$ ). In addition, those who belong to the top 50% and the bottom 50% in *search time* hold different policy judgments on affirmative action especially among Republicans, conservatives, more knowledgeable individuals, those who are highly interested in politics, and those who are low in *symbolic racism* scale. For instance, 90% of Republicans who spent relatively longer time in seeking information viewed affirmative action programs in liberal ways, while only 52% of Republicans who spent relatively shorter time in seeking information did. The difference is statistically significant ( $t = 2.220, p < 0.032$ ). For more detail, see Table 6.2.

To analyze the data in a more completely, I ran two probit models to account for how variation in information seeking affects policy judgments about affirmative action, controlling for the relevant factors. The functional form of the first model was as follows.

$$\Pr(Y_i = 1) = \Phi(\beta_1 * \text{Party Identification}_i + \beta_2 * \text{Political Ideology}_i + \beta_3 * \text{Political Knowledge}_i + \beta_4 * \text{Political Interest}_i + \beta_5 * \text{Symbolic Racism}_i + \beta_6 * \text{Log of Search Time}_i)$$

**(2)**



Where  $Y_i$  is respondent  $i$ 's liberal understanding of affirmative action, which is coded as 1;  $\Phi$  is the standard normal cumulative distribution; and coding schemes for the variables incorporated are the same as in Model (1) and presented in the Appendix 6.A. Note that Model (2) has the same functional form as Model (1), but was run on respondents both in the partisan and factual information conditions.

Next, based on Model (2), I incorporated an interaction term between *log of search time* and *type of information* to examine the joint effect of information seeking and the type of information that participants relied on. The theoretical assumption for the interaction term is that partisan information induces conservative understanding of affirmative action at higher levels of *log of search time*, but factual information induces liberal understanding of affirmative action at higher levels of *log of search time*. The functional form of the second model was as follows.

$$\Pr(Y_i = 1) = \Phi(\beta_1 * \text{Party Identification}_i + \beta_2 * \text{Political Ideology}_i + \beta_3 * \text{Political Knowledge}_i + \beta_4 * \text{Political Interest}_i + \beta_5 * \text{Symbolic Racism}_i + \beta_6 * \text{Log of Search Time}_i + \beta_7 * \text{Type of Information}_i + \beta_8 * \text{Log of Search Time}_i * \text{Type of Information}_i)$$

**(3)**

Where  $Y_i$  is respondent  $i$ 's liberal understanding of affirmative action;  $\Phi$  is the standard normal cumulative distribution; *log of search time \* type of information* is an interactive variable between *log of search time* and *type of information*; and all other variables were coded in the same way as in Model (2).

As shown in Table 6.3, the results of Model (2) support my expectation. Without taking different types of information considered, two variables produce significantly different policy judgments on affirmative action. The coefficient of

*log of search time* is positive and significant at  $p = 0.058$  level, suggesting that participants who expend more time in information seeking and processing are significantly more likely to hold a liberal understanding of affirmative action. And, *symbolic racism* reaches statistical significance at  $p = 0.089$  level, suggesting that those who hold anti-black attitudes likely view affirmative action in conservative ways.

In Model (3), the coefficients of *symbolic racism*, *log of search time*, *type of information*, and the interaction term of *log of search time* and *type of information* reach statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$  level, as shown in Table 6.3. The signs of the coefficients are as expected. Given that the probit coefficients do not provide much intuition about the absolute magnitude of the hypothesized relationships, I graphically display the findings to explain the impact of the independent variables on policy judgment of affirmative action.

First, Figure 6.3 (a) displays changes in predicted probability of liberal understanding of affirmative action for those who are at the minimum and the maximum levels on the *symbolic racism* scale as *log of search time* increases from low to high, holding the other independent variables constant at their mean values. As *log of search time* increases, the predicted probability of liberal understandings of affirmative action increases for those who are both at the maximum and the minimum levels on the *symbolic racism* scale. Yet, the patterns of change in the predicted probability between the two groups are significantly different. Those at the highest level on the *symbolic racism* scale view affirmative action in conservative ways when they do not spend a great deal of time seeking

information. Yet, their liberal understanding of affirmative action increases in a significant fashion the more effort they put into seeking information.

In contrast, those who are at the lowest level on the *symbolic racism* scale view affirmative action in liberal ways regardless of the time they put into information seeking. The difference between those who are at the lowest and the highest levels on the *symbolic racism* scale dies out as they increase their cognitive efforts in information seeking. This pattern suggests that, although racism is a strong determinant in policy judgments of race matters for those who do not care to know more about race matters, the effect of racism on policy understanding of affirmative action is moderated by the extent to which individuals are willing to be engaged in the issue.

Second, Figure 6.3 (b) displays changes in predicted probability for the most and least knowledgeable respondents by *log of search time*. For both groups, the more time individuals expend in information seeking, the more they understand affirmative action in liberal ways. What is distinct between the two groups is that the marginal impact of *log of search time* for the least knowledgeable is bigger (0.315) than that (0.027) for the most knowledgeable. This suggests that those who are knowledgeable are less susceptible to the effects of acquiring new information than those who are not knowledgeable.

Third, as displayed in Figure 6.3 (c), liberals and conservatives are more likely to understand affirmative action in liberal ways as in the more time they spend gathering information. The marginal effects of *log of search time* are bigger

for conservatives (0.566) than for liberals (0.133), suggesting that the impact of information seeking is stronger for conservatives than for liberals.

Policy judgments about affirmative action are significantly influenced by the extent to which an individual uses incoming, relevant information. Those who generally oppose affirmative action—racists, conservatives, and the more knowledgeable—tend to view affirmative action in liberal ways as they become more involved in incoming information. The large differences between those who are high and low on the symbolic racism scale, the more and the less knowledgeable, and liberals and conservatives at the minimum level of information seeking die out at the maximum level of information seeking. The evidence here corroborates my hypothesis that information seeking plays a significant role in moderating the impact of political and racial predispositions on policy judgments of affirmative action. Mere exposure to information is not sufficient to induce changes in policy understanding. Individuals need to cognitively engage an issue, and to the extent that they involve themselves in the issue by seeking and acquiring new information, they are likely to hold policy views different from those that they would otherwise hold.

## **INFORMATION SEARCH AND COMPETENT DECISION-MAKING**

Citizen competence is a broad concept, which is related to a variety of psychological constructs, such as heuristics (e.g., whether citizens effectively take cues from parties, politicians, interest groups, and other citizens, and whether their preferences resemble those of others who are well informed), issue

constraints (e.g., whether citizens hold consistent positions across issues and stable ones over time), issue framing (e.g., whether citizens maintain their positions when given different framings of issues), factual knowledge (e.g., whether citizens know relevant facts about issues), and political sophistication (e.g., whether citizens' preferences are correlated with their values and attitudes) (see Kuklinski and Quirk 2001). Given the broad range of the concept of citizen competence, it is necessary to make it clear how I use the term to account for it on empirical base. Since a full discussion of the concept of citizen competence is beyond the scope of this research, I will simply take the method of Kuklinski and Quirk's (2001) concept of "well-informed-proxy comparisons." Here, the policy judgments of well informed individuals serve as a criterion for a competent decision making.

My analysis is thus to compare policy views of affirmative action programs by individuals who are similar but more or less knowledgeable. I examine the link between knowledge and cognitive engagement, predicting that the less knowledgeable can emulate the more knowledgeable if the former expends as much cognitive effort in information seeking and processing as the latter do. In other words, the effect of cognitive engagement with new information is greater for less knowledgeable individuals than for more knowledgeable individuals if both engage the new information at the same level.

Drawing on the social psychological literature on "cognitive heuristics" (see Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky 1982; Nisbet and Ross 1980; see also Downs 1957), political scientists have presumed that most individuals, especially

less knowledgeable individuals, rely on information shortcuts or heuristics to comprehend politics, just as they do to understand other issues in their everyday life. A multitude of political heuristics has been identified: party identification (Campbell et al. 1960), candidate traits (Popkin 1991), trusted elites (Mondak 1993), interest groups (Lupia 1994), public mood (Rahn 2000), and ideological labels (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991). Indeed, political heuristics seem indispensable especially to less knowledgeable individuals.<sup>35</sup> I test whether partisan information based on political heuristics can provide the helpful shortcuts that some have suggested are especially beneficial for less knowledgeable individuals. I hypothesize that less knowledgeable individuals who acquire partisan information are more likely than those who acquire factual information to hold the same policy judgments as more knowledgeable individuals hold.

#### The Effect of Cognitive Engagement for More or Less Knowledgeable Individuals

Table 6.4 shows there is virtually no difference in their likelihood of holding liberal understandings of affirmative action between more and less knowledgeable respondents. The sample was divided into two mutually exclusive groups based on *general political knowledge* scale. The more and the less knowledgeable were sorted out by the top and the bottom 50% on *general political knowledge* scale.

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<sup>35</sup> Of course, benefits of political heuristics are not limited to less knowledgeable individuals. Political heuristics provide the helpful shortcuts for anybody who make a better judgments with the least efforts.

Among the more knowledgeable, 80% had liberal understandings; but among the less knowledgeable, 79% had liberal understandings ( $t = 0.0001$ ,  $p = 1.000$ ). In contrast, among those in the bottom 50% in Search Time (i.e., those who expended less than 03'30" in information seeking), 41% of those who were the more knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways, while 62% of those who were the less knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways. The difference between the two groups is statistically significant ( $t = 1.707$ ,  $p = 0.046$ ). A significant difference was found between the more and the less knowledgeable groups when they did not care to acquire information. So, the less knowledgeable can emulate the more knowledgeable only if they are highly involved in the issue by proactively seeking and processing information.

The importance of engagement is also demonstrated among those were exposed to the partisan information, as 77% of those who were the less knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways, while only 43% of those who were the more knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways. This difference is statistically significant ( $t = 2.639$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). In contrast, among those were exposed to the factual information, 70% of those who were the more knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways and 56% of those who were the less knowledgeable viewed affirmative action in liberal ways. The difference between the two groups is not statistically significant ( $t = 1.091$ ,  $p = 0.140$ ). The result that the partisan information makes a significant difference between the more and the less knowledgeable does not support the standard view

that partisan, heuristics-based information helps the less knowledgeable to emulate the more knowledgeable.

In short, the performance of the less knowledgeable depends upon the extent to which an individual seeks and processes information and the type of information she seeks and processes. Less knowledgeable individuals can emulate their more knowledgeable counterparts when they spent time in effortful information seeking and processing and when they seek and process the factual information rather than the partisan information.

Given this analysis, I ran a probit model separately for the two groups, the more knowledgeable and the less knowledgeable. The functional form of the model was as follows.

$$\Pr (Y_i = 1) = \Phi (\beta_1 * \text{Party Identification}_i + \beta_2 * \text{Political Ideology}_i + \beta_3 * \text{Political Knowledge}_i + \beta_4 * \text{Political Interest}_i + \beta_5 * \text{Symbolic Racism}_i + \beta_6 * \text{Log of Search Time}_i + \beta_7 * \text{Type of Information}_i)$$

**(4)**

Where the dependent variable is  $i$ 's liberal understanding of affirmative action, which is coded as 1;  $\Phi$  is the standard normal cumulative distribution; coding schemes for the variables incorporated are the same as the previous model; and the model was estimated for the more and the less knowledgeable, separately.

Table 6.5 displays the results. The coefficients of *log of search time* and *type of information* are significant at  $p < 0.097$  level for both more and less knowledgeable individuals. The coefficients of *political ideology* and *symbolic racism* reach statistical significance only for more knowledgeable individuals (at  $p < 0.069$  level). What is notable here is that the signs of the coefficients of the



variables are the opposite for the two different groups, except for *political interest* and *log of search time*. This suggests that the independent variables (except for *log of search time* and *political interest*) function in the opposite directions for the more and the less knowledgeable in determining whether they understand affirmative action in liberal ways or conservative ways.

Figure 6.4 (a) shows that both the more and the less knowledgeable are more likely to view affirmative action in liberal ways as their time expended in information seeking increases. But the marginal effect of *log of search time* for the less knowledgeable is bigger (0.253) than that for the more knowledgeable (0.179), suggesting that information seeking plays a bigger role for the less knowledgeable than for the more knowledgeable. Individuals with less political knowledge can make a decision as if they were knowledgeable, when they expend cognitive effort in actively acquiring incoming, relevant information.

Figure 6.4 (b) demonstrates that the less knowledgeable have similar understandings to the more knowledgeable under the factual information condition. An ANOVA analysis shows that there is no difference between the two groups under the factual information condition ( $F(1, 59) = 0.84, p = 0.363$ ). Under the partisan information condition, however, the less knowledgeable do not hold the same policy judgment as the more knowledgeable hold. Another ANOVA analysis reveals a significant difference between the more and the less knowledgeable in understanding of affirmative action under the partisan information condition ( $F(1, 52) = 5.82, p = 0.019$ ). This result suggests that individuals who are less knowledgeable can make a decision as if they were well

informed when they access factual information but not when they access partisan information.

Finally, the coefficient of *symbolic racism* is negative and significant for the more knowledgeable, indicating that *symbolic racism* plays a significant role in determining policy judgments about affirmative action of the more knowledgeable. The more knowledgeable are significantly less likely to view affirmative action in liberal ways as their *symbolic racism* scale goes higher. But this pattern is not found for the less knowledgeable, as displayed in Figure 6.4 (c).

Overall, evidence shown here demonstrates that more knowledgeable individuals use different factors than less knowledgeable individuals when reaching conclusions about racial policy judgments. First, *political ideology* and *symbolic racism* are significant factors in the policy judgments about affirmative action of the more knowledgeable, but not of the less knowledgeable. Second, partisan information boosts liberal understanding of affirmative action for the less knowledgeable, but boosts conservative understanding of affirmative action for the more knowledgeable. Third, one factor that is common for the two groups is *log of search time*. The more time one expends in information seeking, the more one is likely to view affirmative action in liberal ways, regardless of one's level of knowledge.

An individual can compensate for her lack of stored information by seeking out information. Mere exposure to incoming information is not sufficient for those who lack knowledge to be able to emulate the policy judgments of those who possess lots of knowledge. Also, factual information helps the less

knowledgeable to better emulate the more knowledgeable than does partisan information.

## **DISCUSSION**

The analyses here reveal that different levels of cognitive engagement interact with the different types of information to make a difference in policy judgments about affirmative action. Acquisition of a larger amount of incoming information induces liberal understanding of affirmative action, and factual information produces more liberal understandings of affirmative action if an individual spends a good deal of time seeking and processing relevant information.

These findings are consistent with dual-process theories, which posit that more systematic and effortful processing of objective, factual information results in opinions that differ from those resulting from unsystematic and uneffortful processing of partisan, heuristics-based information. Also, the findings support the thesis of controlled processing of race issues. Although racial issues are cognitively less demanding and more emotionally charged, the effects of racial predispositions on policy judgments about affirmative action are moderated to the extent that an individual seeks and processes new information. In addition, as opposed to the standard views that information shortcuts or partisan cues are efficient for those who are not knowledgeable as well as for those who are knowledgeable, less knowledgeable individuals are not able to reach the same understanding as more knowledgeable individuals are unless the former expended

considerable amount of time in seeking and processing the factual information available from the environment. While scholars propose that information shortcuts allow many citizens to reach better policy judgments, a deeper understanding of how individuals use and process incoming, new information suggests that citizens must learn about political matters by actively expending time and effort in acquiring incoming, relevant information. Information shortcuts do not seem to be a real substitute for stored information in long-term memory or cognitive engagement with incoming information.

To summarize the findings, first, increasing levels of cognitive engagement is a meaningful step for individuals to make more informed and better reasoned understanding of race matters. Second, factual information helps individuals to better emulate the more knowledgeable in understanding affirmative action, to the extent that they expend time in information seeking. Third, individuals can control their racial predispositions to the extent that they engage in incoming, relevant information. Fourth, the availability of or a mere exposure to information cues is not sufficient to ensure citizens' competence.

Finally, it should be noted that measuring cognitive engagement in terms of time expended in information seeking provided empirically grounded account of policy judgments on affirmative action. While scholars have long assumed the role that cognitive engagement may play in shaping policy judgments, a proper measurement of the extent to which an individual uses incoming, new information was hard to come by. I do not argue that my methodology adopted in this research estimates a whole array of cognitive engagement. But I believe that my

measurement of cognitive engagement uncovered how the new information affects policy judgments on affirmative action.

**TABLE 6.1. EFFECTS OF EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS ON POLICY JUDGMENTS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS**

Dependent Variable is Understanding of Affirmative Action Programs (Liberal Understanding = 1)	Model (1)					
	Partisan Information Condition			Factual Information Condition		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Party Identification	-0.675 <b>-0.242</b>	0.797	0.398	0.047 <b>0.008</b>	0.588	0.937
Political Ideology	0.037 <b>0.014</b>	0.669	0.956	-0.736 <b>-0.164</b>	0.738	0.319
Political Knowledge	-1.114 <sup>+</sup> <b>-0.874</b>	0.593	0.060	0.130 <b>0.043</b>	0.390	0.739
Political Interest	-0.090 <b>-0.022</b>	0.782	0.909	1.177 <b>0.166</b>	1.162	0.311
Symbolic Racism	-0.296 <b>-0.429</b>	0.226	0.190	-0.271 <b>-0.392</b>	0.232	0.243
Log of Search Time	-0.781 <b>-0.148</b>	1.362	0.567	3.313 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.823</b>	1.725	0.055
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.441			0.608		
Number of Cases	25			33		

Notes: 1. 2. Entries in bold are changes in predicted probabilities for the dependent variable as each independent variable changes from its minimum to its maximum with other variables at their mean. 2. The positive sign of a coefficient indicates liberal understanding of affirmative action programs.

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .060$ . Significance tests are two-tailed.

**TABLE 6.2. PERCENTAGE OF LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS FOR THOSE IN THE BOTTOM 50% VERSUS THOSE IN THE TOP 50% IN SEARCH TIME, BY FACTORS**

		Percentage of Liberal Understanding of Affirmative Action Programs			
		Subjects in the Bottom 50% in Search Time	Subjects in the Top 50% in Search Time	T	p < /t/
<b>Party Identification</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	0.77 (17)	0.89 (18)	0.927	0.361
	<b>Republicans</b>	0.52 (31)	0.90* (10)	2.220	0.032
<b>Political Ideology</b>	<b>Liberals</b>	0.68 (25)	0.83 (36)	1.470	0.927
	<b>Conservatives</b>	0.43 <sup>+</sup> (37)	0.71 <sup>+</sup> (14)	1.808	0.077
<b>Political Knowledge</b>	<b>High</b>	0.41** (29)	0.79** (29)	3.153	0.003
	<b>Low</b>	0.62 (37)	0.80* (20)	1.392	0.170
<b>Political Interest</b>	<b>High</b>	0.52* (33)	0.79* (24)	2.137	0.037
	<b>Low</b>	0.72 (18)	0.83 (18)	0.778	0.442
<b>Symbolic Racism</b>	<b>High</b>	0.53 (32)	0.60 (15)	0.441	0.661
	<b>Low</b>	0.69** (48)	0.94** (46)	3.209	0.002

*Notes:* Number of cases is in parentheses.

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; Significance tests are two-tailed.

**TABLE 6.3. EFFECTS OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT ON POLICY JUDGMENTS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS**

Dependent Variable is Understandings of Affirmative Action Programs (Liberal Understanding = 1)	Model (2)			Model (3)		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Party Identification	-0.131 <b>-0.081</b>	0.300	0.663	-0.072 <b>-0.025</b>	0.359	0.840
Political Ideology	-0.259 <b>-0.161</b>	0.339	0.444	-0.461 <b>-0.173</b>	0.407	0.257
Political Knowledge	-0.166 <b>-0.232</b>	0.186	0.373	-0.316 <b>-0.286</b>	0.213	0.139
Political Interest	0.013 <b>0.006</b>	0.495	0.979	0.051 <b>0.013</b>	0.516	0.921
Symbolic Racism	-0.177 <sup>+</sup> <b>-0.544</b>	0.104	0.089	-0.256* <b>-0.571</b>	0.124	0.039
Log of Search Time	1.266 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.521</b>	0.667	0.058	3.377* <b>0.916</b>	1.334	0.011
Type of Information				7.272* <b>0.707</b>	3.471	0.036
Log of Search Time * Type of Information				-3.934* <b>-0.996</b>	1.769	0.026
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.328			0.433		
Number of Cases	58			58		

*Notes:* 1. Positive sign indicates liberal understanding of affirmative action programs. For instance, Republicans (coded as 5) are less likely than Democrats (coded as 1) and Independents (coded as 3) to view affirmative action in liberal ways; Conservatives (coded as 5) are less likely than liberals (coded as 1) and moderates (coded as 3) to understand affirmative action programs in liberal ways; The more knowledgeable, those who are more interested in politics, and those who hold stronger racial resentment are less likely to take liberal position on affirmative action programs; Those who expended more time in information seeking are more likely to view affirmative action programs in liberal ways; and those who sought and processed the partisan information (coded as 1) are less likely than those who sought and processed the factual information (coded as 0) to understand affirmative action programs in liberal ways. 2. Type of Information is coded as 1 if the partisan information condition, 0 if the factual information condition. 3. Log of Search Time is the natural log of Search Time. 4. Entries in bold are changes in predicted probabilities for the dependent variable as each independent variable changes from its minimum to its maximum with other variables at their mean.

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; Significance tests are two-tailed.



**TABLE 6.4. PERCENTAGE OF LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF  
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS, BY KNOWLEDGE \* SEARCH  
TIME AND TYPE OF INFORMATION**

		The Less Knowledgeable			The More Knowledgeable			t	p < /t/
		Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N		
Search Time	High	80	0.410	20	79	0.412	29	0.000	1.000
	Low	62*	0.492	37	41*	0.501	29	1.707	0.046
Type of Information	Partisan	77**	0.430	30	43**	0.507	23	2.639	0.006
	Factual	56	0.507	25	70	0.467	33	1.091	0.140

*Notes:* Entries are percentage of liberal understanding of affirmative action programs.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p = .01$ . Significance tests are one-tailed.

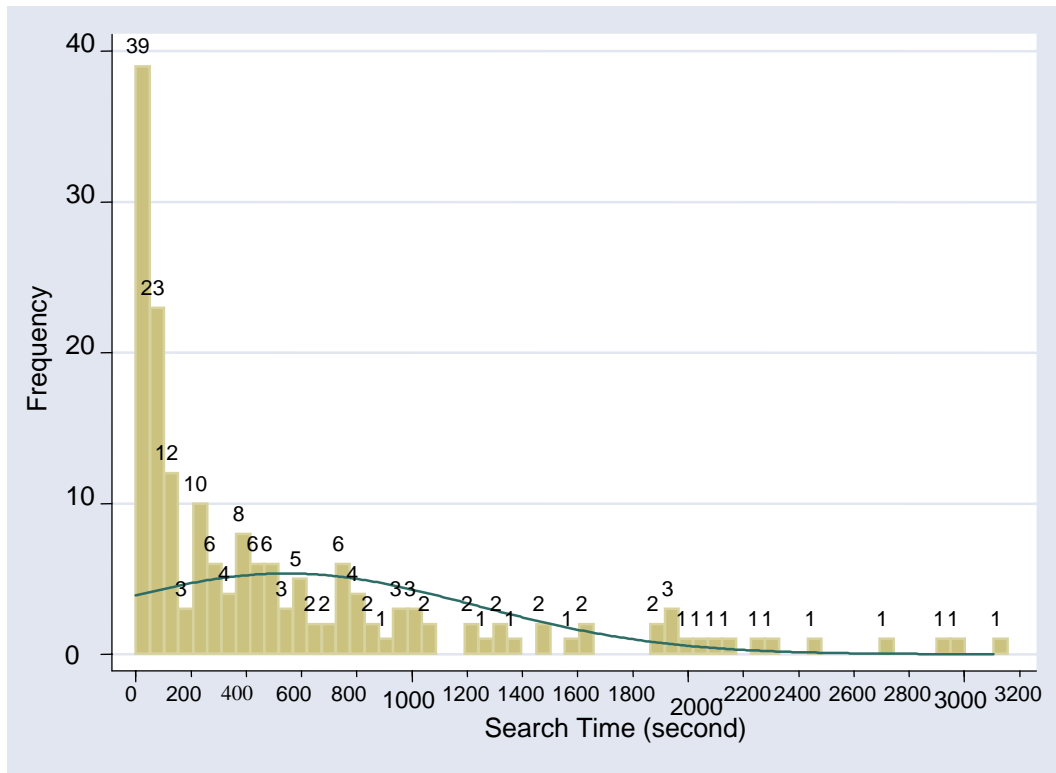
**TABLE 6.5. EFFECT OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT ON POLICY JUDGMENTS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS FOR THE MORE AND THE LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE**

Dependent Variable is Understanding of Affirmative Action Programs (Liberal Understanding = 1)	Model (4)					
	The Less Knowledgeable			The More Knowledgeable		
	B	S.E.	Sig.	B	S.E.	Sig.
Party Identification	-1.368 <b>-0.507</b>	1.086	0.104	0.474 <b>0.252</b>	0.502	0.173
Political Ideology	0.812 <b>0.202</b>	1.006	0.210	-1.112 <sup>+</sup> <b>-0.599</b>	0.693	0.054
Political Interest	0.490 <b>0.072</b>	0.981	0.309	0.469 <b>0.194</b>	0.910	0.303
Symbolic Racism	0.184 <b>0.306</b>	0.273	0.250	-0.469 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.775</b>	0.317	0.069
Log of Search Time	5.034 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.876</b>	3.403	0.069	1.414 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.538</b>	1.085	0.097
Type of Information	3.358 <sup>+</sup> <b>0.160</b>	2.218	0.065	-2.749* <b>0.375</b>	1.554	0.039
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.553			0.478		
Number of Cases	29			29		

Notes: 1. 2. Entries in bold are changes in predicted probabilities for the dependent variable as each independent variable changes from its minimum to its maximum with other variables at their mean. 2. The positive sign of a coefficient indicates liberal understanding of affirmative action programs.

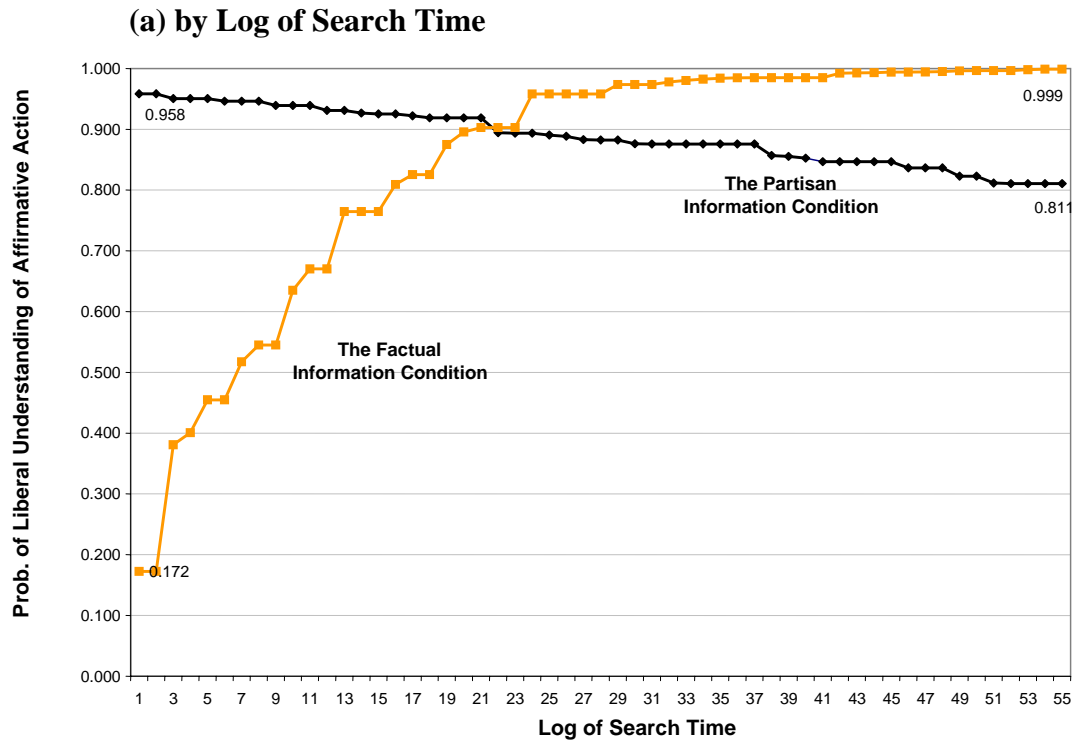
<sup>+</sup>  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ : Significance tests are one-tailed.

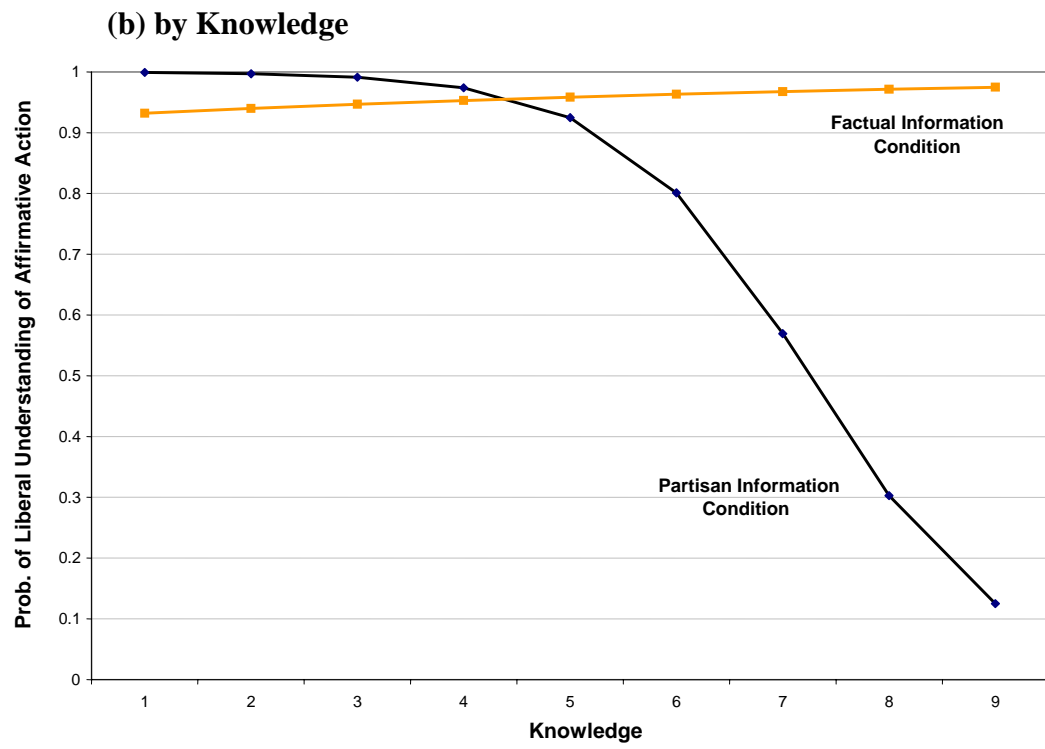
**FIGURE 6.1. HISTOGRAM OF SEARCH TIME IN EXPERIMENT 2**



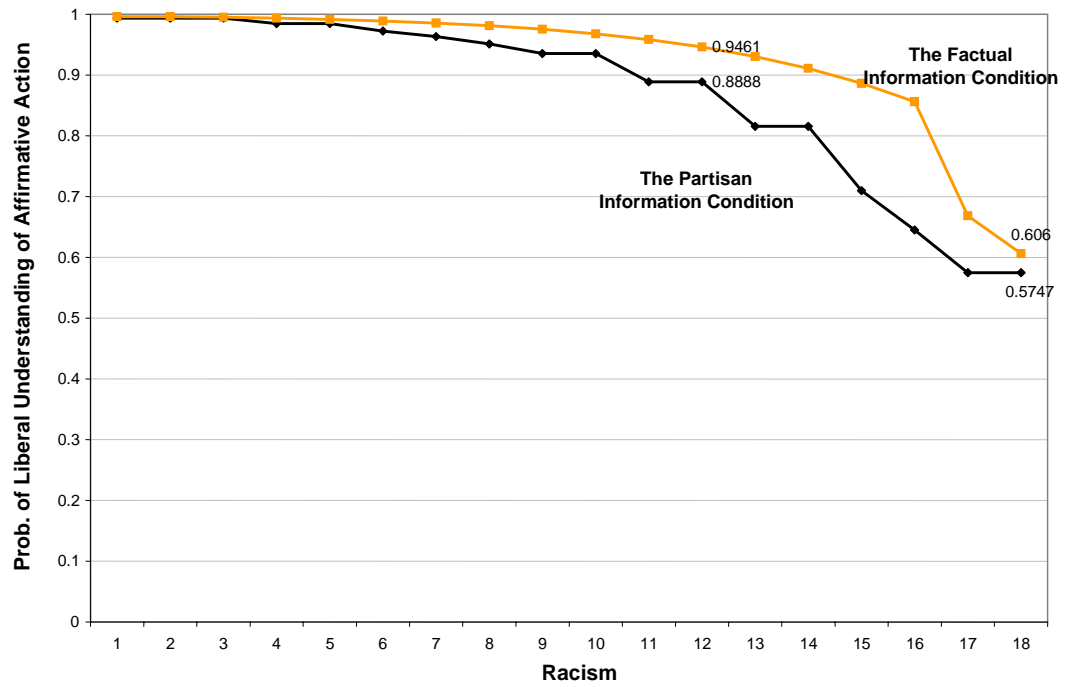
*Notes:* Curve displays a normal density.

**FIGURE 6.2. CHANGES IN PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS UNDER THE PARTISAN AND THE FACTUAL INFORMATION CONDITIONS**



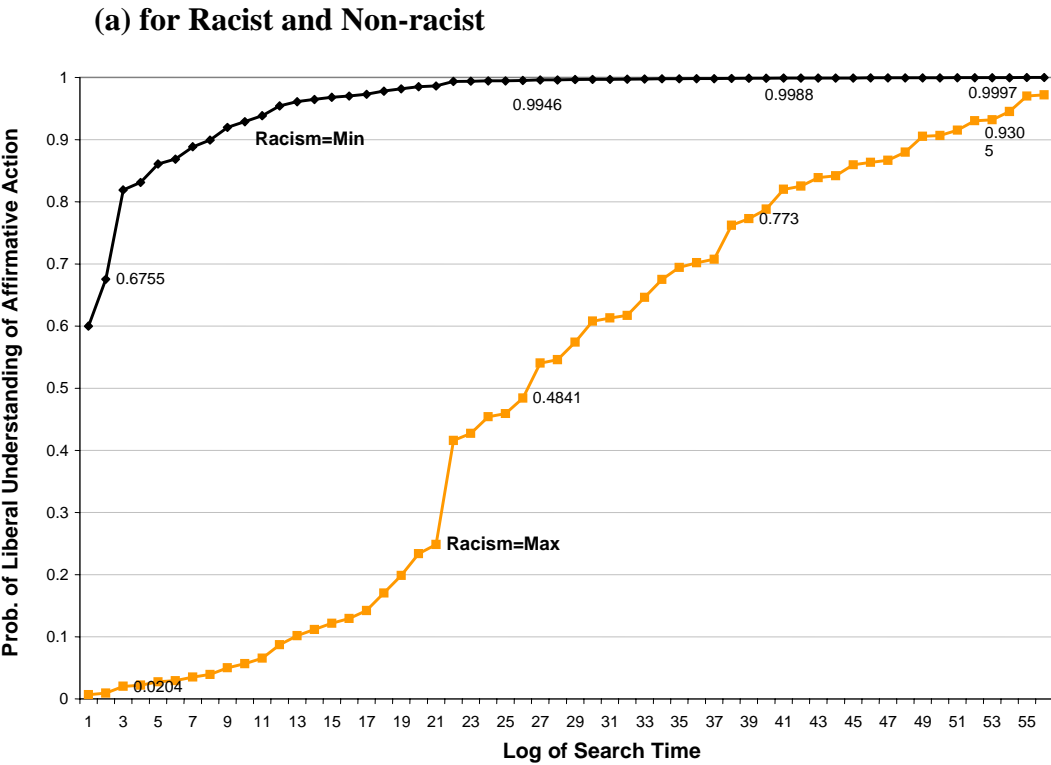


(c) by Symbolic Racism

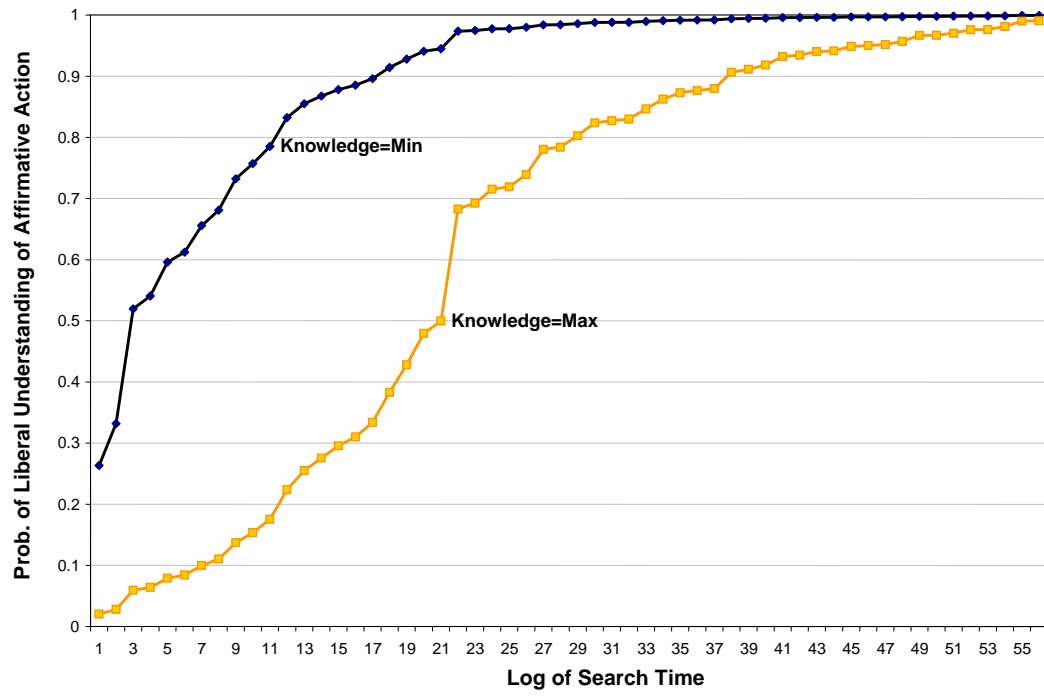


Notes: Predicted probability was computed based on Model (1) in Table 6.1.

**FIGURE 6.3. CHANGES IN PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS BY LOG OF SEARCH TIME**

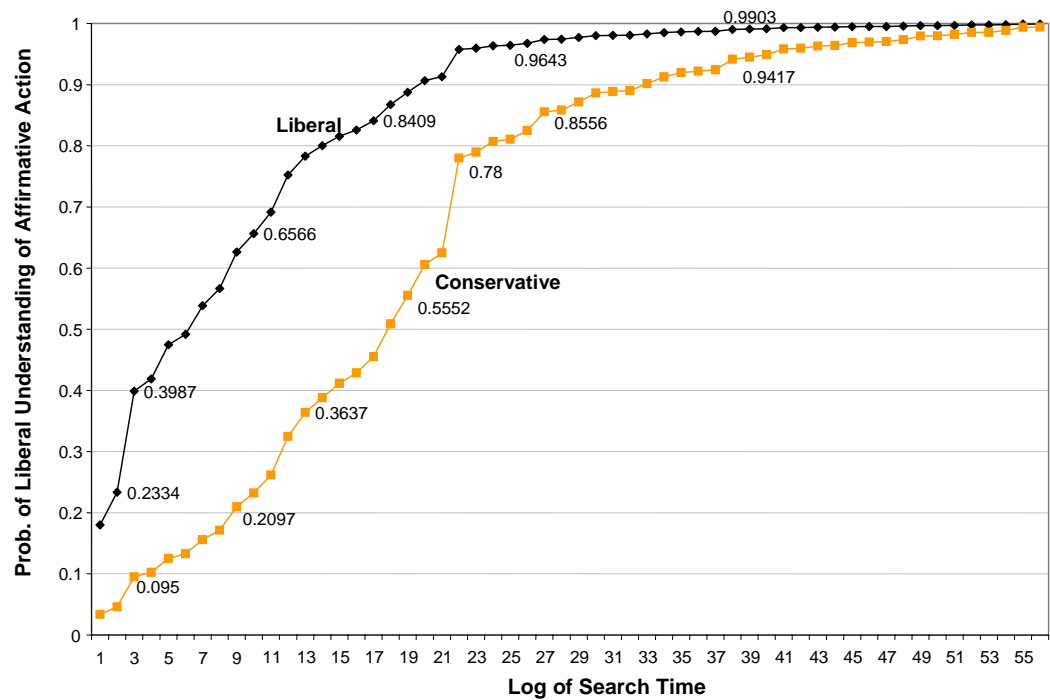


(b) for The More and the Less Knowledgeable



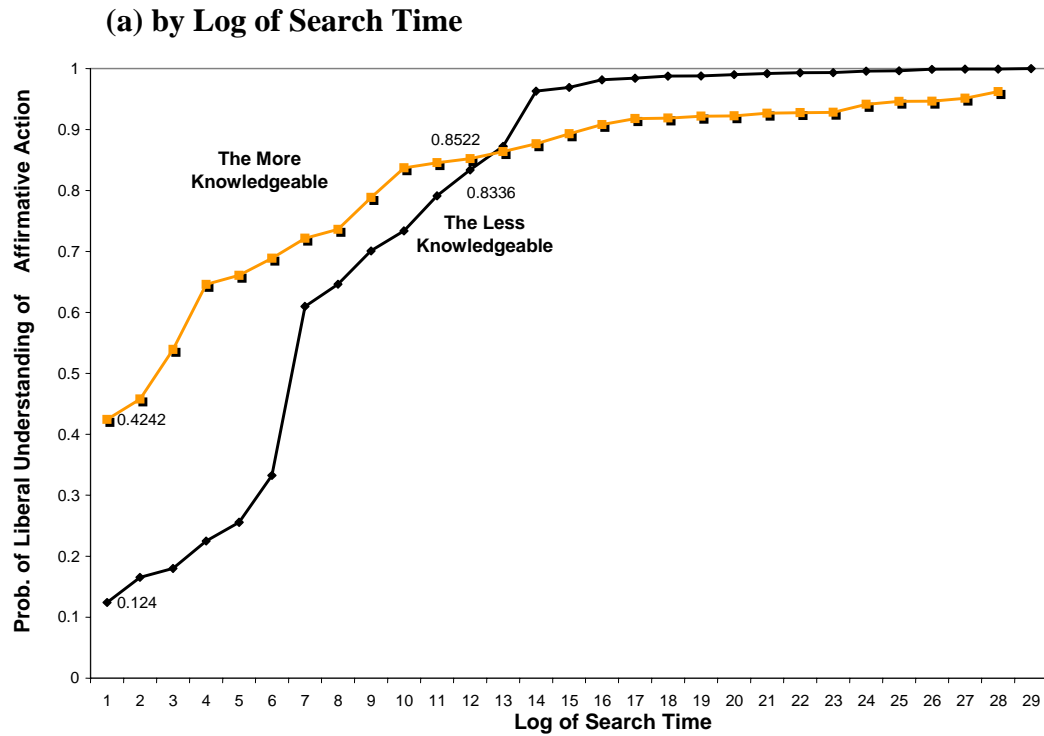


(c) for Liberal and Conservative

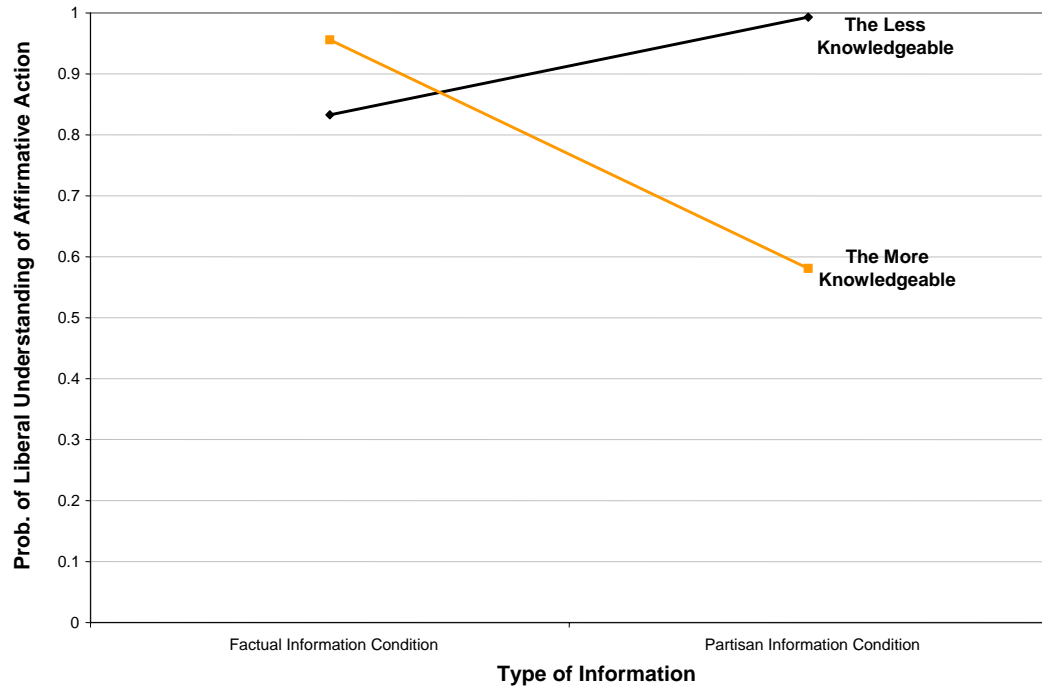


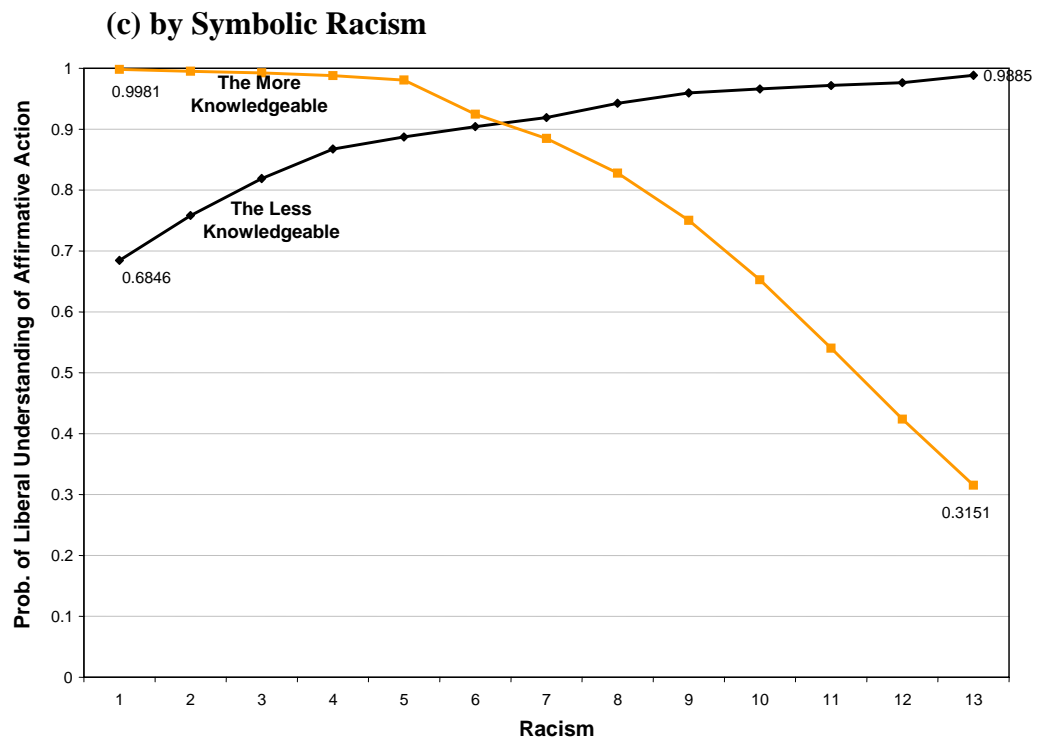
Notes: Predicted probability was computed based on the Model (2) in Table 6.3.

**FIGURE 6.4. CHANGES IN PREDICTED PROBABILITY OF LIBERAL UNDERSTANDING OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS FOR THE MORE AND THE LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE**



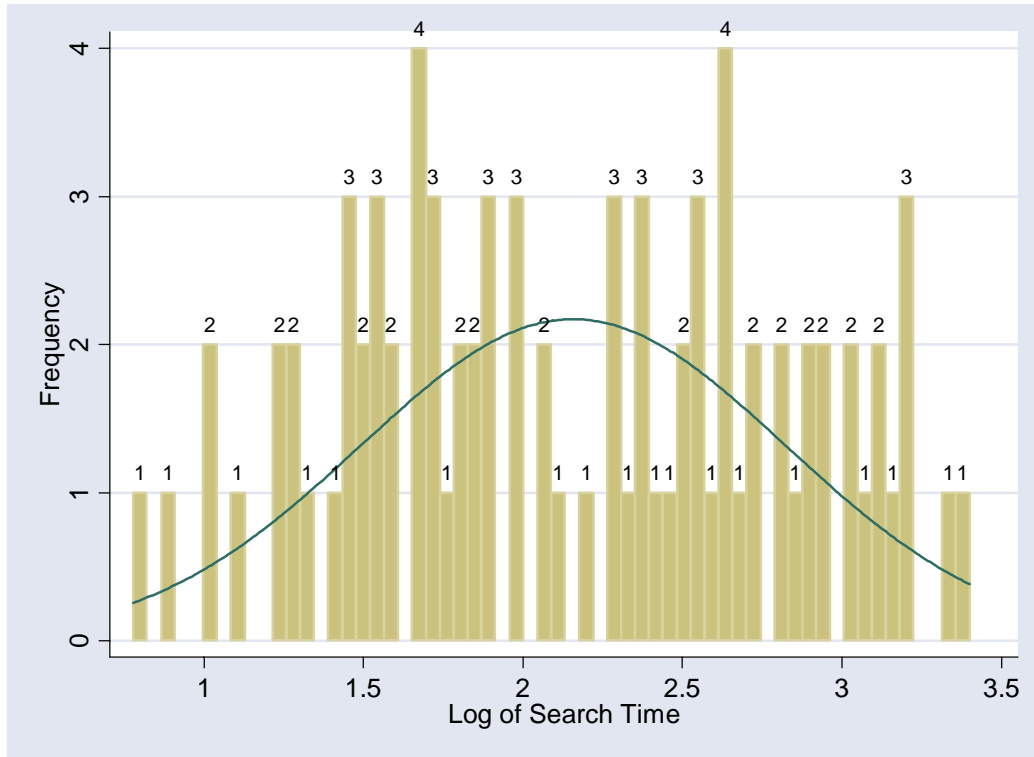
**(b) by Information Condition**





Notes: Predicted probability was computed based on Model (4) in Table 6.5.

**FIGURE 6.5. HISTOGRAM OF LOG OF SEARCH TIME IN  
EXPERIMENT 2**



*Notes:* Curve displays a normal density.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FINAL DISCUSSION: FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

At the end of this journey, informed by my analyses and results, we are now in a better position to return to the two major questions that I posed in the beginning. The questions were about which persons are more likely to acquire new information available from the environment and how variability in information seeking and acquisition determines policy judgments. By providing a theoretically organized approach to information acquisition and its impacts on policy judgments and stressing the method of tracking individuals' activities in information search, this study focused attention on policy judgments on a controversial policy issue, affirmative action programs.

I started with an observation that scholarly focus on minimal use of information and prevalent use of heuristics has undermined the efforts to understand the precise way that an individual acquires new information and uses it to make policy judgments. I have attempted to fill the void between the allegation of minimal use of information and prevalent use of heuristics and the lack of empirical evidence for this allegation.

This final chapter is not a systematic summary of the earlier chapters, but discusses my findings in theoretical perspectives and addresses a few broader arguments that warrant further study. In doing so I do not distinguish sharply between conclusions and findings, for my findings need replications across diverse policy issues and under different contexts.

## **FINDINGS IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

This study was guided by an information processing perspective that emphasizes the possibility that citizens attend to relevant information under certain conditions. In this perspective some citizens can actively seek and process relevant information and thus reach a policy judgment that otherwise would be different. As far as my evidence goes, I can safely say that individuals are not doomed to be cognitive misers but can be proactive information seekers, and that the greater cognitive engagement with factual information leads individuals to reach different policy judgments from those through cognitive engagement with partisan information and the less cognitive engagement.

In another respect, studies show that white opposition to racial policies is driven mostly by affective attitudes toward blacks, such as racial prejudices, resentment, and stereotypes. Furthermore, racial considerations remain critical for shaping Americans' attitudes and policy preferences on a host of policy issues. Notwithstanding the importance of affective attitudes toward blacks in accounting for racial and other policy preferences, I postulated that cognitive engagement would play a significant role in shaping policy judgments on race issues. The findings reported here are consistent with this postulation: policy judgments on affirmative action are contingent upon the extent to which individuals acquire new information and the type of information that they choose to consider. More precisely, individuals who expend more cognitive efforts in seeking and processing information tend to understand affirmative action programs in liberal

ways, holding their political ideology, party identification, and racial affects constant, and that this tendency becomes stronger when individuals acquire factual information than when they acquire partisan information.

Drawing on the theories of automatic and controlled information processing, I examined the interactions between cognitive engagement and affective racial attitudes. According to automaticity thesis, people perform most decision-making tasks automatically and unconsciously, and white Americans' policy judgments on race are considered to be made by automatic process driven by anti-black attitudes (Bargh 1999; Bargh and Chartrand 1999; see also Mendelberg 2001). Evidence shows, on the other hand, that some individuals can successfully inhibit the automatically activated considerations and replaced them with thoughts reflecting racial norms like racial equality and negation of the stereotype (Devine 1989; Devine and Monteith 1993). The findings reported in this study support the possibility of controlled information processing for those who expend a fair amount of cognitive efforts to acquire information. Those who are cognitively involved in new information, especially the factual information, are less influenced by anti-black attitudes.

There has been a prolonged and heated debate among researchers of American race relations and white racial attitudes. Although research on race and public opinion is ample and in many respects illuminating, as Hochschild (2000) claims, "the debate among proponents of principled conservatism, symbolic racism, and social structural approaches has gone as far as it can for the present"



(340).<sup>36</sup> Similarly, “neither side [of principled conservatism, symbolic racism, and social structural approaches] has produced incontrovertible evidence in support of their position,..., resulting in an impasse that we believe has hindered the advancement of research on white racial policy attitudes” (Feldman and Huddy 2005, 168).

My purpose was to offer an empirically grounded account of white Americans’ policy judgments on race-targeted public policies, with an alternative perspective that leads us to go beyond racism-centered approaches. The theoretical importance of cognitive engagement in accounting for the formation of policy judgments is clear. I have shown that although anti-black attitudes remain critical for shaping white Americans’ racial policy judgments, their impact on policy judgments is variable, depending on the extent to which individuals pay cognitive attention to the issue. By adding this case to the research, we are better able to understand policy judgments on race-targeted public policies.

### **IMPLICATIONS ON THE FORMATION OF RACIAL POLICY JUDGMENTS**

White Americans have become less concerned about race matters. A greater portion of white Americans are “rationale ignorant” concerning race matters as well as other policy matters (Shipler1977; Nadeau, Niemi, and Levine 1993; Schuman et al. 1997). Sniderman and Carmines (1997) observe “the

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<sup>36</sup> Hochschild (2000) contends that “these authors [proponents of racism-centered theory and politics-centered theory—my addition] appropriately criticize each other for not paying sufficient attention to the many meanings of concepts that they have found to be crucial to their own research. They might instead, or in addition, devote their energy to developing new ways to bring

continuing obtuseness and indifference of white Americans to the special cross of discrimination and economic disadvantage that black Americans still must bear” (16). Similarly, Shipler (1977) finds that “Most whites rarely have to give race much thought...Few whites I interviewed had considered the questions [regarding race matters] I put to them” (10). A study of the 1991 NES Pilot Study by Nadeau, Niemi, and Levine (1993) shows that 54 percent of white Americans overestimate percent of black population as being more than 30 percent (the actual black population was 12.1 percent, according to the 1990 Census). All these findings suggest that most white Americans have no incentives or interests at stake in understanding race matters. Because of this ignorance and apathy, many white Americans are riveted by their “racial” considerations rather than reasoned or informed considerations in making policy judgments on race issues.

In addition, race has become less salient as a policy issue in the national political scene and in national-level political campaigns (Frymer 2002). And, it also has become more complicated and ambiguous in terms of ideological and partisan line of thinking (Sniderman and Carmines 1997; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Edsall and Edsall 1992; Feldman and Zaller 1994). Furthermore, elite-supplied information as to race matters has deteriorated and coded (Edsall and Edsall 1992; Frymer 2002; Mendelberg 2001). Edsall and Edsall (1992) observe that “race is no longer a straightforward, morally unambiguous force in American politics; instead, considerations of race are now deeply imbedded in the strategy

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more of these concepts into the foreground, where they can be carefully analyzed without themselves and their readers in endless detail” (331-332).

and tactics of politics, in competing concepts of the function and responsibility of government, and in each voter's conceptual structure of moral and partisan identity" (53). This sort of information environment requires ordinary citizens to expend much more cognitive efforts in identifying the nuanced differences of competing elites' contingent positions on race matters.

With that said, a primary source of the problem is the information environment unsatisfactory for citizens' information acquisition or learning. Although ordinary white citizens see little relevance of race issues in public life and feel little personal responsibility to race matters, a better information environment for learning or information acquisition will help them to get more involved in and learn about race issues. According to one basic lesson from modern cognitive science, the availability of the relevant information is necessary for active attention to and involvement in the issues. If the information environment where relevant information is readily available and information cost is cheap, then, as this study demonstrated, white citizens tend to have different views on affirmative action programs with more cognitive engagement with the issue.

## **Appendix 1. Variables Numbers and Coding Schemes for the 1996 and 2004 NES**

The 1996 and 2004 (advance release file) NES data is drawn from ICPSR website at <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>. The following list provides variable numbers for all variables used in the analyses. For each variable, the numbers started with v96 corresponds to the 1996 NES data and the numbers started with v04 represents the variables in the 2004 NES data. The coding scheme and descriptive statistics are also presented as follows.

### **Dependent Variables:**

**Federal Aid to Blacks: v961210, v043158**

**Affirmative Action: v961209, v045207a**

The NES codes Federal Assistance with 1 for “Government should help blacks” and 7 for “Blacks should help themselves” and Affirmative Action with 1 for “Favor” and 5 for “Oppose.” Thus higher scores represent more opposition to racially targeted policies.

Question wording of affirmative action was that “Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it gives blacks advantages they haven't earned. What about your opinion -- are you FOR or AGAINST preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?” And, question wording of Federal aid to blacks was that “Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. (Suppose these people are at one end of a

scale, at point 1.) Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves.(Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7.) And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place YOURSELF on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

**Independent Variables:**

**Attentiveness: v960069, v960073, v960074, v960489, v043402, v043406, v043407, v043159**

R's Cooperation and Interest in the interview are 5-point scale and R's Sincerity is 3-point scale. The NES codes these variables with 1 for high cooperation and interest and with 5 for low cooperation and interests and with 1 completely sincere and with 3 for often seem to be insincere. I recoded the sincerity variable into 5-point scale and all the three variables in reverse order. Thus, in my analyses, for R's cooperation and interest, 1=very poor and low, 2=poor and below average, 3=fair and average, 4=good and above average, 5=very good and very high; and for R's sincerity, 1=often seem to be insincere, 3=usually sincere, 5=completely sincere.

The question wording of "importance of aid to blacks" reads: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. How important is this issue to you?" This question was courted in the 1996 (v960489) and 2004 NES (v043159) but not in others. This variable

on 1-to-5 scale was also recoded in reverse order: 1=not important, 2=not too important, 3=somewhat important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important. The composite measure of attentiveness was standardized.

**Symbolic Racism: v961230, v961231, v045193, v045194, v045195, v045196**

The items from the 2004 NES are (1) The history of slavery and discrimination makes it more difficult for blacks to succeed; (2) If blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites; (3) Blacks should work their way up like other racial groups; and (4) Blacks have gotten less than they deserve. The items from the 1996 NES are: (1) We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country; and (2) one of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance.

Each variable is 5-point scale, 1 for agree to 5 for disagree. I recoded the variables, except for v045194 and v045195, in reverse order. Thus higher scores indicate more symbolic racism. In the 1996 NES, I used 2 items of symbolic racism, thus as shown in the table below, the measure of symbolic racism ranges from 2 to 10. In the 2004 NES, since 4 items are used, it ranges from 0 to 20.

**Stereotypes: v961312, v961315, v961318, v045223, v045227, v045231**

Each variable is 7-point scale, 1=hardworking/intelligent/trustworthy, 7=lazy/unintelligent/ untrustworthy. The measure of stereotypes is the sum of the three variables.

**Political Knowledge: v961189, v961190, v961191, v961192, v961072, v961073, v045163, v045164, v045165, v045089, v045090**

This measure was based on factual knowledge items of identification questions (the vice-president, the Chief of Justice of the Supreme Court, the Russian President (or the British Prime Minister), and the Speaker of the House-- the 1996 NES only) and party control of the House and the Senate. Correct answer is coded 1 and incorrect answer or refuse to answer are coded 0. Each variable is summed up for the measure of political knowledge.

**Party Identification: v960420, v043116**

A 7-point scale is used: 1=Strong Democrat, 2=Weak Democrat, 3=Leaning Democrat, 4=Independent, 5=Leaning Republican, 6=Weak Republican, 7=Strong Republican.

**Ideology: v960369, v043086**

A 5-point scale is used: 1=Liberal, 3=Moderate, 5=Conservative.

**Education: v960610, v043254**

**Age: v960605, v043250**

**Male: v960066, v043411** coded 1=Male, 0=Female

**South: v960109, v041203** coded 1=South (10 southern states), 0=Non-South

## Appendix 2. Online Survey Questionnaire

### Survey Session

Please select and check a box.

1.1. Some people don't pay much attention to political campaign. How about you, would you say that you have been/were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns (so far) this year?

- ☐ Not much interested
- ☐ Somewhat interested
- ☐ Very much interested
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

1.2. Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal which party wins the presidential election this fall, or that you can't care very much which party wins?

- ☐ Don't care very much
- ☐ Care a good deal
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

1.3. How much would you say that you personally cared about the way that the elections to the U.S. House of Representatives came out?

- ☐ Not very much
- ☐ Pretty much, very much
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

1.4. Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say that you follow what's going on in government and public affairs more of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?

- ☐ Hardly at all
- ☐ Only now and then
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know



2.1. Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his/their own. Where would you place your self on this scale?

Government see to job  
and good standard of  
living

Government let each  
person get ahead on his  
own

1

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5  
☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

7

2.2. In the past yeas, we have heard a lot about improving the position of black people in this country. How much real change do you think there has been in the position of black people in the past few years?

- ☐ Not much at all
- ☐ Some
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

2.3. Some say that the civil rights people have been trying to push too fast. Others feel they haven't pushed fast enough. How about you?

- ☐ Too slowly
- ☐ About right
- ☐ Too fast
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

2.4. Some people say that the government in Washington should see to it that white and black children go to the same schools. Others claim that this is not the government's business. Have you been concerned enough about this question to favor one side over the other? If yes, do you think the government in Washington should

- ☐ see to it that white and black children go to the same school
- ☐ stay out of this area as it is none of government's business
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

2.5. Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel

that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where do you place yourself on this scale, of haven't you though about this?

Government should help  
blacks

Blacks should help  
themselves

1

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5  
☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

7

2.6. Do you think that large companies should be required to give a certain number of jobs to blacks, or should the government stay out of this? Where do you place yourself on this scale?

Government should make  
the companies to give a  
certain number of jobs to  
blacks

Government should stay  
out of this

1

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5  
☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

7

2.7. Would you think what is the best understanding of affirmative action programs?

- ☐ Correction of the effects of past discrimination
- ☐ Prohibition of future and current discrimination
- ☐ Promotion of diversity or inclusion
- ☐ Violation against the merit or desert principle
- ☐ Reverse Discrimination against bystanders
- ☐ Quota system
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

3.1. How old are you?  yrs

3.2. Are you a ☐ freshman, ☐ sophomore, ☐ junior, or ☐ senior?

3.3. Are you male or female? ☐ Female ☐ Male

3.4. What racial or ethnic group or groups best describe you?

- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Hispanic

- ☐ Black
- ☐ White
- ☐ Others; Specify

4.1. Which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?

- ☐ Democrats
- ☐ Republicans
- ☐ Can't say; Don't Know

4.2. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to override a presidential veto?

- ☐ One-Half plus one vote
- ☐ Three-Fifths
- ☐ Two-Thirds
- ☐ Three-Quarters
- ☐ Some other percentages
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

4.3. In general, thinking about the political parties in Washington, would you say Democrats are more conservative than Republicans, or Republicans are more conservative than Democrats?

- ☐ Democrats are more conservative
- ☐ Republicans are more conservative
- ☐ Both parties are equally conservative
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

4.4. Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?

- ☐ The President
- ☐ Congress
- ☐ The Supreme Court
- ☐ Some other Groups/Persons



Can't Say; Don't Know

4.5. How many members of the U.S. Supreme Court are there?



Nine



Eleven



Some other numbers



Can't Say; Don't Know

4.6. What job or political office is now held by Dennis Hastert?

4.7. What is the name of the president of Russia?

**Just give me your best guess on the following questions.**

5.1. What percent of people in this country would you say are black?  percent

5.2. What percent of all the poor people in this country would you say are black?  
 percent

5.3. Of all the people arrested for violent crimes in this country last year, what percent do you think were black? Do you think it's closer to  percent

5.4. Of all the welfare recipients in this country last year, what percent do you think were black? Do you think it's closer to  percent

5.5. Of all the black males of working age in this country, what percent do you think are unemployed? Do you think it's closer to  percent

5.6. Of all the black population in this country, what percent do you think are educated four years or more of college?  percent

5.7. What percent of white citizens do you think support for quotas in education?  
 percent

**We are asking your political orientation.**

6.1. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

- ☐ Democrat (GO TO 6.2)
- ☐ Republican (GO TO 6.3)
- ☐ Independent (GO TO 6.4)
- ☐ No Preference
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

6.2. (If Democrat): Would you call yourself a Strong Democrat or not very Strong Democrat?

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Not very Strong

(SKIP TO 6.5)

6.3. (If Republican): Would you call yourself a Strong Republican or not very Strong Republican?

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Not very Strong

(SKIP TO 6.5)

6.4. (If Independent): Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic party or closer to the Republican party?

- ☐ Closer to the Democratic party
- ☐ Closer to the Republican party
- ☐ Neither

6.5. Generally speaking, would you consider yourself to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven't you thought about this?

- ☐ Liberal (GO TO 6.6)
- ☐ Conservative (GO TO 6.7)
- ☐ Moderate (GO TO 6.8)

☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

6.6. (If Liberal); Do you think of yourself as a Strong liberal or not a very strong liberal?

☐ Strong

☐ Not very Strong

(SKIP TO 6.9)

6.7. (If Conservative); Do you think of yourself as a Strong conservative or not a very strong liberal?

☐ Strong

☐ Not very Strong

(SKIP TO 6.9)

6.8. (If Moderate): Do you think yourself as more like a liberal or more like a conservative?

☐ More like a Liberal

☐ More like a Conservative

☐ Just a Moderate

6.9. Do you remember when you were growing up whether your father was very much interested in politics, somewhat interested, or did not he pay attention to it?

☐ Did not pay much attention

☐ Somewhat interested

☐ Very much interested

☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

6.10. Now how about your mother? When you were growing up was she very much interested in politics, or didn't she pay much attention to it?

☐ Did not pay much attention

☐ Somewhat interested

☐ Very much interested

☐ Can't Say; Don't Know

**Now I am going to present several statements. After each one, I would like you to tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly.**

7.1. Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.2. Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.3. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.4. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.5. Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.6. Government officials usually pay less attention to a request or complaint from a black person than from a white person.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.7. Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat



- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.8. We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.9. One of the big problem in this country is that we don't have give everyone an equal chance.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.10. This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.11. It is not really that big of a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat

- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.12. If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.13. Most people who don't get ahead should not blame the system; they have only themselves to blame.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.14. Hard work offers little guarantee of success.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.15. If people work hard they almost always get what they want.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.16. Most people who do not get ahead in life probably work as hard as people who do.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.17. Any person who is willing to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly
- ☐ Don't Know

7.18. Even if people try hard they often cannot reach their goals.

- ☐ Agree Strongly
- ☐ Agree Somewhat
- ☐ Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- ☐ Disagree Somewhat
- ☐ Disagree Strongly



Don't Know

**I'd like to get your feeling toward some groups and I'll ask you to rate that group on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. Rating above 50 means that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Rating below 50 means that you feel unfavorable and cool toward the group. Rating right at the 50 degree mark means that you don't feel particularly warm or cool. You may give any number from 0 to 100 to tell me how favorable or unfavorable your feelings are.**

8.1. The Federal Government in Washington: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.2. Blacks: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.3. Conservatives: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.4. Liberals: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.5. Labor Unions: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.6. Big Business: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.7. Poor People: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.8. Whites: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.9. Hispanics: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.10. People on Welfare: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.11. Christian Fundamentalists: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.12. Environmentalists: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.13. Gay Men and Lesbians: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

8.14. Feminists: , or ☐ No Rating; I do not know where to rate

Thanks a lot.

Now you are entering the information session by clicking

[Submit Query](#)

## Appendix 3. Online Briefing Document

### a. Instruction Page

#### Welcome to The Race and Information Project

Principal Investigators: Jaesung Ryu, Ph.D. Candidate & Professor. Daron R. Shaw, Department of Government, University of Texas at Austin.

This project is designed to provide you with information regarding Affirmative Action Programs (AAP), to you make a better decision on race-related public policies.

Affirmative action has been one of the most controversial policy issues in the U.S. The issue has historically been, and continues to be, plagued by ambiguity surrounding the concept and by the manner in which the various policies have been implemented. This is primarily because since the 1970s there have been many different kinds of affirmative action regulations, programs, understandings, and purposes.

It might be easy to answer to the question of whether to support or oppose AAP. But it might NOT be easy to explain to others about what one knows about them. According to a study, approximately 40 percent of people are completely unfamiliar with the concept of Affirmative Action; and many of those who claimed familiarity provide a vague or inaccurate definition. This study indicates that many people do not have knowledge about AAP, and that they lack opportunity to acquire information to enlarge their knowledge and sharpen their rationale for or against AAP.

As you access the websites here, we want you try to think about the following questions: Do the nature and magnitude of continuing economic and social inequality between the races require concerted public and private action, or are natural forces in the economy satisfactorily narrowing the gaps? Do race-based discrimination and exclusion continue to be important factors in American life, affecting the opportunities and welfare of blacks and other minorities, or are they not aberrant and insubstantial? Is affirmative action effective in combating discrimination and exclusion? Is it consistent with inviolable principles in the U.S.?

Please note that people best answer these questions when they are more informed and imagine themselves as a responsible public official. Feel free to think and take time while processing information and answering the survey questions.

Now, you will go to **Survey Session**, in which you'll be asked several questions. Please note that your personal identity is never disclosed to anybody including the investigators. Then you move onto **Information Session**, in which a wide range of information about AAP will be provided. Throughout the web pages you can select the information you want to study from the menu. As you will see, there will be no problem for you to search the information you want because the websites are exactly the same as any other websites. Anytime you think you feel you have enough information, you can go to the final session **Survey Session II**, in which just four questions will be courted. Please note that if you do not finish the second survey, you cannot claim the credit.

Again, the websites provided will help you better understand AAP as well as lead you to more informed decision-making on this important policy matter. Hope you enjoy yourself to surf the sites.

So, are you ready to go? All Right. [Here We Go](#)

### b. Initial Page in Information Session in Experiment 1

You can collect and integrate information with regard to race and Affirmative Action Programs by clicking the items on the menu below. Each item contains detailed information. We strongly recommend you to do a

thorough search, so that you not only enlarge your knowledge about race and Affirmative Action Programs but also shape (and reshape) your issue position on this important policy matter.

Many believe that substantive, factual knowledge (like in Green Box) is essential to make a sound, rational decision. Here are statistics of lives of African Americans, historical origins of AAP, must-know rulings of the Supreme Court on AAP, and recent events regarding AAP.

In another way, a shortcut to posit yourself on some policy issues is to look at the positions of reference groups or individuals who you can trust (like in Orange Box). Here are ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the presidents & prominent politicians, the public interest groups, the political parties, and the American public.



### c. Initial Page for Treatment Group 1 (Factual Information Condition) in Experiment 2

You can collect and integrate information with regard to race and Affirmative Action Programs by clicking the items on the menu below. Each item contains detailed information. We strongly recommend you to do a thorough search, so that you not only enlarge your knowledge about race and Affirmative Action Programs but also shape (and reshape) your issue position on this important policy matter.

Many believe that substantive, factual knowledge (like in Green Box) is essential to make a sound, rational decision. Here are statistics of lives of African Americans, historical origins of AAP, must-know rulings of the Supreme Court on AAP, and recent events regarding AAP.





#### d. Initial Page for Treatment Group 2 (partisan Information Condition) in Experiment 2

You can collect and integrate information with regard to race and Affirmative Action Programs by clicking the items on the menu below. Each item contains detailed information. We strongly recommend you to do a thorough search, so that you not only enlarge your knowledge about race and Affirmative Action Programs but also shape (and reshape) your issue position on this important policy matter.

In another way, a shortcut to posit yourself on some policy issues is to look at the positions of reference groups or individuals who you can trust (like in Orange Box). Here are ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the presidents & prominent politicians, the public interest groups, the political parties, and the American public.

### Presidents & Politicians



### Interest Groups



### The Political Parties: Democrats v. Republicans



### What Citizens Think: Public Opinion Polls




What Americans Think About Affirmative Action	
Strongly Oppose	14%
Oppose	24%
Neutral	24%
Support	24%
Strongly Support	14%
Total: 100%	


## e-1. President and Politicians

<p><b>Presidents and Politicians Speak out...</b></p> <p>Presidents and prominent political figures are at the center of public policy making. They set the national agenda, provide references by which ordinary citizens can start thinking about and understand the issues, and mobilize people who would support their policy positions.</p> <p>For the sake of their own political cause and/or interests, presidents and politicians provide well-organized, easy-to-follow definitions and arguments about public policy issues.</p> <p><b>George Bush (43th)    Bill Clinton    Lyndon B. Johnson    Ronald Reagan    Martin Luther King, Jr.    Jesse Jackson    Colin Powell    Justice Clarence Thomas</b></p>	<p><b>Go To Survey</b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><b>Presidents and Politicians</b></p> <p><b>Interest Groups</b></p> <p><b>Political Parties</b></p> <p><b>Public Opinion Polls</b></p> <p><b>Statistics</b></p> <p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>The Supreme Court</b></p> <p><b>Recent Development</b></p>
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### e-1.1. Presidents and Politicians: George W. Bush

<a href="#">George W. Bush</a>	<a href="#">Bill Clinton</a>	<a href="#">Lyndon Johnson</a>	<a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr.</a>
	<b>President George Bush</b> <p>I strongly support diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity in higher education. But the method used by the University of Michigan to achieve this important goal is fundamentally flawed. At their core, the Michigan policies amount to a quota system that unfairly rewards or penalizes perspective students, based solely on their race.</p> <p>Our Constitution makes it clear that people of all races must be treated equally under the law. Yet we know that our society has not fully achieved that ideal. Racial prejudice is a reality in America . It hurts many of our citizens. As a nation, as a government, as individuals, we must be vigilant in responding to prejudice wherever we find it. Yet, as we work to address the wrong of racial prejudice, we must not use means that create another wrong, and thus perpetuate our divisions.</p> <p>America is a diverse country, racially, economically, and ethnically. And our institutions of higher education should reflect our diversity...Yet quota systems that use race to include or exclude people from higher education and the opportunities it offers are divisive, unfair and impossible to square with the Constitution.</p>		<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
	<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a>		


## e-1.2. Presidents and Politicians: Bill Clinton

<a href="#">George W. Bush</a>	<a href="#">Bill Clinton</a>	<a href="#">Lyndon Johnson</a>	<a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr.</a>
	<p><b>President Bill Clinton</b></p> <p>Let me be clear about what affirmative action must not mean and what I won't allow it to be. It does not mean—and I don't favor—the unjustified preference of the unqualified over the qualified of any race or either gender. It doesn't mean—and I don't favor—numerical quotas. It doesn't mean—and I don't favor—selection or rejection of any employee or student solely on the basis of race or gender without regard to merit.</p> <p>Affirmative action did not cause the great economic problems of the American middle class. It is just wrong.</p> <p>Affirmative action has not always been perfect, and affirmative action should not go on forever. It should be changed now to take care of those things that are wrong, and it should be retired when its job is done. I am revolved that that day will come. But the evidence suggests—indeed, screams—that that day has not yet come.</p>	<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>	
		<p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a></p> <p><a href="#">Interest Groups</a></p> <p><a href="#">Political Parties</a></p> <p><a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>	

### e-1.3. Presidents and Politicians: Lyndon Johnson

<a href="#">George W. Bush</a>	<a href="#">Bill Clinton</a>	<a href="#">Lyndon Johnson</a>	<a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr.</a>
	<b>President Johnson</b> <p>You do not take a man who, for years, has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race saying, “You are free to compete with all the others,” and still justly believe you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough to just open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.</p> <p>This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom of opportunity, not just legal equity; not just equality as a right and theory, but equality as a right and result.</p> <p>The Negro, ..., will have to rely mostly on his own efforts. But he just can not do it alone. For they did not have the heritage of centuries to overcome. They did not have the cultural tradition which had been twisted and battered by endless years of hatred and hopelessness. Nor were they excluded because of race or color—a feeling whose dark intensity is matched by no other prejudice in society.</p>	<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>	<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a>

#### e-1.4. Presidents and Politicians: Martin Luther King, Jr.

<a href="#">George W. Bush</a>	<a href="#">Bill Clinton</a>	<a href="#">Lyndon Johnson</a>	<a href="#">Martin Luther King Jr.</a>
	<b>Martin Luther King, Jr.</b> <p>Can any fair-minded citizen deny that the Negro has been deprived? Few people reflect that for two centuries the Negro was enslaved, and robbed of any wages—potential accrued wealth which would have been the legacy of his descendants. All of America's wealth today could not adequately compensate its Negroes for his centuries of exploitation and humiliation. It is an economic fact that a program such as I propose would certainly cost far less than any computation of two centuries of unpaid wages plus accumulated interest. In any case, I do not intend that this program of economic aid should apply only to the Negro, it should benefit the disadvantaged of all races.</p>		<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a>

## e-2. Interest Groups

<p><b>Interest Groups on Race &amp; Affirmative Action</b></p> <p>Many believe that organized groups, pursuing special agendas, dominate the governmental and policy-making process. There are an enormous number of interest groups in the United States, and millions of Americans are members of one or more groups, at least to the extent of paying dues or attending an occasional meeting. Over the past thirty years, there has been an enormous increase both in the number of interest groups seeking to play a role in the American political process and in the extent of their opportunity to influence that process.</p> <p>Public interest groups articulate the policy issues they are concerned and mobilize as many public as possible for promoting their political goals. For people public interest groups are an information shortcut to understand on-going political controversies as well as an helping hand for their political cause and/or interest.</p> <p>Consider the issue positions of the following public interest groups on race and affirmative action.</p> <p><b>National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)    The Center for Individual Rights    NFL-CIO    American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI)</b></p>	<p><b>Go To Survey</b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><b>Presidents and Politicians</b></p> <p><b>Interest Groups</b></p> <p><b>Political Parties</b></p> <p><b>Public Opinion Polls</b></p> <p><b>Statistics</b></p> <p><b>Origins</b></p> <p><b>The Supreme Court</b></p> <p><b>Recent Development</b></p>
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**e-2.1. Interest Groups: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)**

<a href="#">NAACP</a>	<a href="#">The Center for Individual Rights</a>	<a href="#">NFL-CIO</a>	<a href="#">American Civil Rights Coalitions</a>
<p><b>National Association For the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)</b></p> <p><b>Our Mission:</b> The NAACP insures the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority groups and citizens; achieves equality of rights and eliminates race prejudice among the citizens of the United States; removes all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic processes; seeks to enact and enforce federal, state, and local laws securing civil rights; informs the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and seeks its elimination; educates persons as to their constitutional rights and to take all lawful action in furtherance of these principles.</p> <p>Equal opportunity programs such as affirmative action are effective, fair, and necessary, particularly since as you yourself have admitted racial discrimination still exists. In education, employment, and contracting, ethnic minorities and women are still largely underrepresented. Equal opportunity programs provide qualified women and people of color with opportunities they might not otherwise have. In many ways, equal opportunity programs are the epitome of the American ideal of self-reliance and personal responsibility: they help to provide access, yet it is up to the individual to work hard to take advantage of the opportunities that may be available.</p> <p>Critics of affirmative action sometimes disingenuously inject the issue of "quotas" into the public debate. Such divisive tactics have misled many to believe that affirmative action and "quotas" are the same thing - for example, that employers are required by law to hire fixed percentages of members of specific groups, regardless of their qualifications. Such claims are clearly erroneous: the Supreme Court has repeatedly made clear that quotas are illegal and that properly-designed affirmative action programs simply create opportunities for qualified women and people of color.</p>			<p><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b>  <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a>  <a href="#">Interest Groups</a>  <a href="#">Political Parties</a>  <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>



## e-2. 2. Interest Groups: The Center for Individual Rights

<a href="#">NAACP</a>	<a href="#">The Center for Individual Rights</a>	<a href="#">NFL-CIO</a>	<a href="#">American Civil Rights Coalitions</a>
<p><b><a href="#">The Center for Individual Rights</a></b></p> <p>CIR's civil rights litigation is based on the principle of strict state neutrality: the state must not advantage some or disadvantage others because of their race.</p> <p>Race, like religion, must be placed beyond the reach of the state. Our objections to racial preferences are legal, moral, and pragmatic. Preferences are almost always unconstitutional when used to achieve an arbitrary racial diversity; they are only legal when narrowly tailored to remedy past discrimination against identifiable individuals. As a moral matter, preferences are dehumanizing and reduce individuals to the color of their skin. And pragmatically, racial preferences almost always add to division and discord in society.</p> <p>In a case that could sharply limit the federal government's use of racial preferences for minority contractors, CIR is representing a small Long Island company whose ability to compete (and even stay in business) continues to be hobbled by the federal government's extensive use of race preferences in awarding government contracts.</p> <p>The complex, mechanical preferences used by Department of Defense include quota-like goals, set-asides, noncompetitive contract awards, a ten percent price adjustment factor, and performance evaluation incentives for contracting officers. These preferences, codified in Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act as well as in related statutes and regulations, are said to be for small, "socially disadvantaged" business owners of all races. However, the government defines social disadvantage so as to presumptively include virtually all racial minorities, ranging from African-Americans and Hispanics to Samoans, Tongans, Pakistanis, and Sri Lankans.</p> <p>In theory, the preference program is limited to "economically disadvantaged" individuals — those with net worth of no more than \$750,000. In practice, the beneficiaries include many millionaire minority business owners.</p>			<p><b><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a></p> <p><a href="#">Interest Groups</a></p> <p><a href="#">Political Parties</a></p> <p><a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

### e-2.3. Interest Groups: NFL-CIO

<a href="#">NAACP</a>	<a href="#">The Center for Individual Rights</a>	<a href="#">NFL-CIO</a>	<a href="#">American Civil Rights Coalitions</a>
<p><b>NFL-CIO</b></p> <p>The AFL-CIO has long supported affirmative action as an effective way to promote diversity and remedy past and present discrimination. Solid affirmative action program in our nation's university system is one of the first steps to reducing prejudice and stereotypes in America's workplaces.</p> <p>The unique opportunities to interact with people from other races and ethnic groups on a college campus at the very threshold of the workplace that are fostered by the admissions policies will make students not only more productive members of society, but better citizens in our democracy and in the workplace.</p> <p>Among the most clearly documented educational benefits of a diverse student body is the reduction of stereotypes and prejudices that lead to discrimination. Specifically, multiple long-term national studies of primary, secondary as well as higher education have documented a link between interaction among students of diverse races and ethnic backgrounds and a reduced resistance to working with such people after graduation. These studies demonstrate that white, African American and Hispanic students who have gone to school with diverse peers are more likely to work well in integrated workplaces.</p>			<p><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

#### e-2.4. Interest Groups: American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI)

<a href="#">NAACP</a>	<a href="#">The Center for Individual Rights</a>	<a href="#">NFL-CIO</a>	<a href="#">American Civil Rights Coalitions</a>
<p><b><a href="#">American Civil Rights Institute</a></b></p> <p>The American Civil Rights Institute is a national civil rights organization created to educate the public about racial and gender preferences.</p> <p>The Right Argument: The so-called "diversity rationale" for preferences is constitutionally insufficient to justify discrimination on the basis of skin color or where a student's ancestors came from. Furthermore, achieving skin-color diversity assumes that all racial minorities are simply interchangeable with one another: Any black student in a college class will bring a "black" perspective to the discussion and the learning experience: it doesn't matter if he or she attended an impoverished inner-city high school or a chic prep school, black or brown skin creates diversity.</p> <p>The Wrong Argument: The rewards of "diversity" -- or, in reality, a student body that is proportionate to the nation's racial and ethnic populations -- is so beneficial to everyone, that admitting or rejecting students because of skin color is permissible. Objective social scientists have questioned the methodology and validity of this argument.</p> <p>The Split-the-Baby Argument: Even if educational diversity at the public universities is important enough to justify a thumb on the scale in favor of certain preferred minorities, the school's racial preference policies must be fashioned in a way that is "narrowly tailored" -- in other words, the implementation of racial preferences must be accomplished through laser surgery, rather than a shotgun approach. In the real world of college admissions policies, this means the thumb on the scale can't be too heavy.</p>			<p><b><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b>  <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a>  <a href="#">Interest Groups</a>  <a href="#">Political Parties</a>  <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

### e-3. Political Parties

<p><b>Democrats vs. Republicans on Race &amp; Affirmative Action</b></p> <p>Many place political parties at the center of democratic political life, believing that they are the most effective institutions for promoting democracy for the people. A long line of thinkers have maintained that parties are essential to both the creation and the furthering of one of the democratic values--civic participation in political process.</p> <p>Political parties offer ways of how to view what is going on in politics. This is why partisan labeling on political issues is a very strong cue which ordinary citizens can use to guide themselves in making their political decisions.</p> <p>Presented below are the 2000 and 2004 National Party Platforms for Democrats and Republicans, a summary of parties' electoral politics, and the current presidential campaigns, regarding race and affirmative action.</p> <p><b><a href="#">Democratic National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>    <a href="#">Republican National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>    <a href="#">Party Politics and Race</a>    <a href="#">Democrats vs. Republican in 2004 Campaign</a></b></p>	<p><b><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b> <b><a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a></b> <b><a href="#">Interest Groups</a></b> <b><a href="#">Political Parties</a></b> <b><a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></b> <b><a href="#">Statistics</a></b> <b><a href="#">Origins</a></b> <b><a href="#">The Supreme Court</a></b> <b><a href="#">Recent Development</a></b></p>
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### e-3.1. Political Parties: Democratic National Platform, 2000 & 2004

<a href="#">Democratic National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Republican National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Party Politics and Race</a>	<a href="#">Political Parties in 2004 Campaign</a>
<p><b>2000 Democratic National Platform</b></p> <p>America's diversity is expanding, yet amidst important signs of progress, there is widespread evidence of persistent discrimination, growing racial segregation of our schools and neighborhoods, and dream-crushing barriers to opportunity. We cannot-- we dare not--remain a nation divided. Our vision is of an America healed of hatreds and is understanding, with equality and opportunity so rich that legacies of discrimination and exclusion will be found only in history books, and not in our communities.</p> <p>Despite undeniable progress over the last several decades, inequality and polarization nevertheless persist in far too many American workplaces, schools, and communities. Over the last eight years, we have fought hard to end discrimination. We have increased funding for civil rights enforcement--so that the laws on our books are not just pleasant words, but pledges of justice.</p> <p>Al Gore has strongly opposed efforts to roll back affirmative action programs. He knows that the way to lift this nation up is not by pulling the weakest down, but by continuing to expand opportunities for everyone who wants to achieve.</p> <p>Al Gore and the Democratic Party know that much remains to be done. We must remember we do not have an American to waste. <b>We continue to lead the fight to end discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation.</b> The Democratic Party has always supported the Equal Rights Amendment and will continue to do so.</p> <p><b>2004 Democratic National Platform</b></p> <p>Our commitment to civil rights is ironclad. We will restore vigorous federal enforcement of our civil rights laws for all our people, from fair housing to equal employment opportunity, from Title IX to the Americans with Disabilities Act. <b>We support affirmative action to redress discrimination and to achieve the diversity from which all Americans benefit.</b></p> <p>Racial and religious profiling is wrong and we will work to stamp it out. Hate crimes desecrate sacred spaces and demean good people, and we support a strong national law to punish them.</p>			<p><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b>  <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a>  <a href="#">Interest Groups</a>  <a href="#">Political Parties</a>  <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

### e-3.2. Political Parties: Republican National Platform, 2000 & 2004

<a href="#">Democratic National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Republican National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Party Politics and Race</a>	<a href="#">Political Parties in 2004 Campaign</a>
<p><b>2000 Republican National Platform</b></p> <p>We seek to be faithful to the best traditions of our party. We are the party that ended slavery, granted homesteads, built land grant colleges, and moved control of government out of Washington, back into the hands of the people. We believe in service to the common good--and that good is not common until it is shared.</p> <p><b>2004 Republican National Platform</b></p> <p>Equality of individuals before the law has always been a cornerstone of our party. We therefore oppose discrimination based on sex, race, age, religion, creed, disability, or national origin and will vigorously enforce anti-discrimination statutes. As we strive to forge a national consensus on the crucial issues of our time, we call on all Americans to reject the forces of hatred and bigotry. Accordingly, we denounce all who practice or promote racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic prejudice, and religious intolerance...<b>We believe rights inhere in individuals, not in groups. We will attain our nation's goal of equal opportunity without quotas or other forms of preferential treatment.</b> It is as simple as this: No one should be denied a job, promotion, contract, or chance at higher education because of their race or gender. Equal access, energetically offered, should guarantee every person a fair shot based on their potential and merit.</p>			<p><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

### e-3.3. Political Parties: Party Politics and Race

<a href="#">Democratic National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Republican National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Party Politics and Race</a>	<a href="#">Political Parties in 2004 Campaign</a>
<p><b>Party Politics and Race:</b>  The primary goal of political parties is to win the elections, so that they can execute the policies that they believe work better or are right. They take certain issue positions by which they court voters in election campaigns. Race and Affirmative Action are, many believe, wedge issues. Followings are about how race has been treated in the presidential elections campaigns since 1930s.</p> <p><b>The 1968 Election: Humphery vs. Nixon:</b> The election of 1968 signaled the end of the civil rights era and the beginning of the Republican dominance in presidential elections, <b>a dominance built in large part on the successful racial tactics of the Nixon campaign.</b></p> <p><b>The 1968 election was the first in which a majority of whites voted for a Republican party</b> firmly aligned with the center-right. The Democrats, to their electoral determinant, were firmly established as the party of blacks and the left and increasingly lost their attraction for most whites. <b>From 1968 onward the Democratic party experienced high levels of white defection from its ranks, accompanied by eventual conversion to the Republican party.</b></p> <p><b>The 1972 Election: McGovern vs. Nixon:</b> Focusing public attention on the costs of the new liberalism, Nixon sought to provide moral and ideological legitimacy to those who did not want to pay those costs.</p> <p><b>Race facilitated the beginning of an ideologically conservative conversion of the electorate,</b> as the social costs of programs such as housing integration, busing, and affirmative action became indissolubly fused in the minds of crucial numbers of voters with steeply rising taxes, cultural metamorphosis, increases in violent crime, expanding welfare rolls, greater numbers of illegitimate children, and evidence of the deterioration of both black and white family structure.</p> <p><b>The 1976 Election: Carter vs. Ford:</b> The political landscape heading into the election season of 1976 was dominated by a single issue: Watergate. Explicitly racial issues were less pressing by 1976 than they had been in any election since 1960.</p> <p>Ford, for reasons of either strategy or conscience, let sleeping racial issues lie and did not reach out to blacks or racially conservative whites.</p> <p>On the other hand, Jimmy Carter achieved Bobby Kennedy's dream of bringing together blacks and blue-color whites in a reconciling coalition. He did this, however, not by forthrightly addressing busing and affirmative action, but by adroit vagueness on racial issues.</p> <p><b>In the end, neither Ford or Carter would venture far into the ghetto, the</b></p>			<p><a href="#">Go To Survey</a></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b>  <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a>  <a href="#">Interest Groups</a>  <a href="#">Political Parties</a>  <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a></p>

perfect symbol of how both campaigns did not want to highlight the issues of race.

**The 1980 Election: Carter vs. Reagan:** Racial issues were far from the minds of most voters in 1980. Racial issues seldom surfaced. The presidential campaigns of 1980 reflected a weary centrism on racial matters.

Yet amid the noise of the 1980 election, racial politics can be discerned at key points. Truly, racial politics was so embedded in our national elections that not even high unemployment and an ongoing foreign policy crisis could eliminate it from the campaign.

Reagan had found an ostensibly neutral language that would become a powerful tool with which to advocate stands that polarize voters on race-freighted issues--issues ranging from welfare to busing to affirmative action. He did do without communicating overt bigotry or anti-black to whites. By 1980 the issues of taxes, of an ailing economy, and of the collective set of grievances closely linked to race and rights--including crime, affirmative action, welfare spending, busing, IRS regulation of the Christian school movement, women's liberation, homosexual rights, abortion, etc.--had reached an unprecedented level of intensity among key segments of the white electorate. This intensity provided Reagan and the Republican party with the opportunity to activate a new set of polarizing issues to rupture the frayed class base of a traditional, economically-oriented Democratic liberalism.

By 1980, the white public had become far more ambivalent-- torn between support for the principle of racial justice, but opposed to aggressive mechanisms to remedy discrimination. Democratic whites who voted for Reagan in 1980 were more conservative on racial issues than were Republican voters. White Democrats who stayed loyal to Carter, in contrast, were more liberal than were Republicans.

**The 1984 Election: Mondale vs. Reagan:** Reagan's campaign knew well before the election that 90 percent of blacks would vote against them, but instead of attempting to reduce that number, they sought to get 58 percent of the white vote to counterbalance the Democrats' strength among blacks.

Reagan made almost no effort to woo the black vote, as he had in 1980. Overall, the Republican strategy on race was to ignore blacks, except as scarecrow to spur white registration. There was no plan to inflame the racial divide by raising affirmative action. The Reagan strategists intended to use social issues as a wedge to divide Democrats from their loyalty to Mondale, but the issue they focused on were school prayer and, to a lesser extent, abortion.

Mondale's racial liberalism hurt him greatly in the South, and Jackson's candidacy served to make race much more salient. The backlash against Jackson was deep and played a significant role in Reagan's victory. It did not get spoken of openly often, but it resided deep in the psyche of many whites.



**The 1988 Election: Dukakis vs. Bush:** By 1988, the perception of a link between the Democratic party and controversial government policies on race, rights, and taxes has become imbedded in the conscious and unconscious memory of American politics--a perception still close enough to the surface to be accessible to political manipulation. This perception often exerted influence on an unarticulated level, a level at which the national Democratic party was still tied, in the minds of many voters, to the problems of crime, welfare, school failure, family dissolution, spreading urban squalor, an eroding work ethic, and global retreat.

The use of themes ranging from law and order to Willie Horton to the ACLU has sought to take political advantage of the linkage of backs to crime. Regardless of the legitimacy of the issues of black poverty and crime as subjects for public policy debate, their political function has been to polarize the electorate in a manner beneficial to the development of a majority conservative coalition.

**The 1992 Election: Clinton vs. Bush:** As the Republicans forswore both sincere outreach to blacks and the ugly race baiting of 1988, Clinton was able to downplay racial issues to an extraordinary degree. As he did on a whole array of social issues, Clinton found the precise tone of sincere moderation on race that resonated with Reagan Democrats. Wounded by a brief steep recession, the Republican party could find no effective response to Clinton's careful positioning on race.

Clinton appeared to be willing to trade enthusiasm among blacks in return for taking white votes from Bush. Clinton's task, then, was to hold onto his black support without seeming to appear overly submissive to it and to reach out to white Reagan democrats without gratuitous offense to African Americans.

The debate over racial equality under the law was long over. Neither proponents nor opponents of affirmative action, hater crimes legislation, or laws against racial profiling could credibly claim that any of these issues were of the scope or importance of the great civil rights battles of the sixties.

### e-3.4. Political Parties: Democrats vs. Republican in 2004 Campaign

<a href="#">Democratic National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Republican National Platform, 2000 &amp; 2004</a>	<a href="#">Party Politics and Race</a>	<a href="#">Political Parties in 2004 Campaign</a>
<b>Bush vs. Kerry on Race and Affirmative Action</b> <p>Bush's appearance prompted criticism of his civil rights record from the campaign of Democratic rival John Kerry. <b>Bush drew just 9 percent of the black vote in 2000, the lowest since Barry Goldwater garnered just 6 percent after his campaign against Johnson in 1964,</b> and has tried sporadically to attract more black voters.</p> <p>Kerry's campaign accused Bush of "backsliding" on civil rights throughout his White House term and said the appearance was hollow, given Bush's record on civil rights. Kerry spokesman Phil Singer said Bush had nominated judges who would roll back civil rights, had "effectively closed" the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and had opposed affirmative action.</p> <p>In January 2003, Bush asserted that a program of racial preferences for minority applicants at the University of Michigan was "divisive, unfair and impossible to square with the Constitution." He took a position against the program in a Supreme Court case--acting on the birthday of civil rights hero Martin Luther King.</p>			<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Presidents and Politicians</a> <a href="#">Interest Groups</a> <a href="#">Political Parties</a> <a href="#">Public Opinion Polls</a>

#### e-4. Public Opinion Polls

##### **Citizens' Views on Race and Affirmative Action**

Many ordinary folks think that knowing the opinions of the majority is helpful to make their own decisions. In this section you can learn how your fellow Americans think about race matters and affirmative action programs. Americans' racial attitudes have changed a lot since the 1960s. Presented are:

- Trend data for questions concerning white explanations of black socioeconomic disadvantages; questions about perceptions of discrimination; and questions about two forms of affirmative action;
- More recent data concerning the same questions mentioned above;
- Scholarly discussions about racial attitudes of white Americans based on the poll results;
- Theoretical explanations of why some white Americans oppose Affirmative Action.

**[Trend of Polls, 1971-2000](#) || [Recent Polls, 2001-2004](#) || [Scholarly Discussions about Racial Attitudes](#) || [Explanations of Opposition to Affirmative Action](#)**

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### e-4.1. Public Opinion Polls: Trend of Polls, 1971-2000

#### Trend of Polls, 1971-2000

Inequality due to

	1985	1986	1988	1989	1990	1991	1993	1994	1996
Discrimination	41%	40	39	38	36	35	37	36	34
Less Ability	78	79	80	81	81	85	88	86	90
No Chance for Education	52	52	52	53	52	52	54	49	45
No Motivation	39	36	38	38	35	39	46	45	48

Blacks have as good a chance as white people to get any kind of job for which they are qualified

	1963	1978	1989	1990	1991	1993	1995	1997
As good/same chance	51%	82	74	79	74	72	71	81

In your area, blacks generally are discriminated in getting housing qualified

	1981	1989	1994
No Discrimination	83%	79	82

In your area, blacks generally are discriminated in getting managerial jobs

	1981	1989	1994
No Discrimination	74%	76	80

These days police in most cities treat blacks as fairly as they treat whites

	1981	1989	1992	1994
Agree	62%	48	53	53

Are you for or against quotas to admit black students for colleges and universities?

	1986	1988	1990	1992
Favor	29%	28	30	26

Are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?

	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996
Favor	15%	13	17	14	10	12

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### e-4.2. Public Opinion Polls: Recent Polls, 2001-2004

### Recent Polls, 2001-2004

Do you generally favor or oppose affirmative action programs for women?

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
2003	59%	34	7
2001	53%	38	9

Do you generally favor or oppose affirmative action programs for racial minorities?

	Favor	Oppose	No Opinion
2003	47%	43	8
2001	47%	44	9

Which comes closer to your view about evaluating students for admission into a college or university ? Applicants should be admitted solely on the basis of merit, even if that results in few minority students being admitted (or) an applicant's racial and ethnic background should be considered to help promote diversity on college campuses, even if that means admitting some minority students who otherwise would not be admitted?

	Solely on Merit	Racial Background Considered	No Opinion
2003	69%	27	4

If two equally qualified students, one white and one black, applied to a major U.S. college or university, who do you think would have the better chance of being accepted to the college ?the white student, the black student? or would they have the same chance?

	White Student	Black Student	Same Chance	No Opinion
2003	32%	29	36	4

Do you think that businesses should or should not be allowed to consider race as a factor in making hiring decisions?

	Yes, Should	No, Should Not	No Opinion
2003	11%	87	2

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Do you think that colleges should or should not be allowed to consider race as a factor in student admission decisions?

	Yes, Should	No, Should Not	No Opinion
2003	16%	84	-
2001	11%	7	2

On the whole, do you think affirmative action has been good for the country, or do you think it has not been good?

	Good	Not Good	No Opinion
2001	58%	33	9

In general, do you think we need to increase, keep the same, or decrease affirmative action programs in this country?

	Increase	Keep the Same	Decrease	No Opinion
2001	24%	34	35	7
1995	31%	26	37	6

Today do you think affirmative action programs are needed to help women and minorities overcome discrimination, or are they not needed today?

	Needed	Not Needed	No Opinion
2001	56%	41	3
1995	49%	47	4

Do you think the day will ever come that affirmative action programs will no longer be needed at all, or will they always be needed?

	Always Needed	Not Needed	No Opinion
2001	66%	30	4
1995	69%	27	4

### e-4.3. Public Opinion Polls: Scholarly Discussions about Racial Attitudes

Scholarly Discussions about White Racial Attitudes	Go To Survey
<p><b>Principles of Equal Treatment:</b> It would be reasonable to conclude that there has been a remarkably large, wide-ranging, and generally consistent movement toward white acceptance of the principles of equal treatment and integration in most important areas of American life. Moreover, clear-cut educational differences support the assertion that more-educated respondents are more liberal in their responses, and consistent regional differences indicate a historic North-South difference that disappears only when a ceiling of 100 percent is approached.</p> <p><b>Implementation of Equal Treatment:</b> The questions about government implementation of principles of equal treatment and integration produce results more complex than those produced by the questions about the principles themselves. Levels of support go down whenever concrete action is proposed. Generally speaking, Americans moderately support compensatory action(e.g., extra training for minorities), and oppose preferential treatment and the use of quotas.</p> <p><b>Beliefs about Inequality:</b> White Americans have some difficulty when asked to account for black disadvantage. The type of explanation that has greatest appeal is one that focuses on a lack of motivation by blacks to improve their own status. If blacks really wanted to, and were willing to work hard, so the explanation goes, their problems could be solved, At the same time, there is not much recognition of past or present discrimination as a factor impeding black achievement, and there is evidence that even limited recognition of discrimination as a source of black disadvantage has decreased over time.</p> <p><b>Affirmative Action:</b> White support for affirmative action in the sense of compensatory preferential treatment for blacks has never been close to being the majority position during the relatively brief period since 1985. Depending on phrasing, support has ranged from at most a third of the white public down to just a few percentage points, and with little evidence of change over time. The least support occurs when preferential treatment is generalized beyond particular settings in which discrimination is said to have taken place in the past.</p>	<p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Presidents and Politicians</li><li>Interest Groups</li><li>Political Parties</li><li>Public Opinion Polls</li><li>Statistics</li><li>Origins</li><li>The Supreme Court</li><li>Recent Development</li></ul>

#### e-4.4. Public Opinion Polls: Explanations of Opposition to Affirmative Action

##### Explanations of Opposition to Affirmative Action:

There are several explanations about why some white Americans oppose affirmative action.

**The Persistence of Domination:** The primary cause of white Americans' opposition to affirmative action is to maintain economic, political, and cultural dominance over blacks. It is argued that white Americans have a superficial adherence to principles of equality and no real tendency to call on these principles when real-life issues are at stake. **The increasing number of people who take liberal positions on principles of equality is in fact no more than a superficial shift in ideological tactics that is used to defend white interests more effectively.**

**Symbolic Racism and Racial Resentment:** This thesis is also skeptical about the significance of white attitudes that appear liberal with regard to principles of equal treatment. We have a new form of racial attitudes, called symbolic racism, which is composed of a blend of antiblack affect and belief in traditional American values of individualism and self-reliance. The word "symbolic" is used to imply that **these new white attitudes are based not on materialistic, self-interest, but rather on a more general sense that blacks are violating American values of individualism through their persistent demands for special treatment like affirmative action.** Antiblack affect is regarded as coming largely from childhood, though its exact origin is left somewhat indeterminate.

**Individualism and Equalitarianism:** In this thesis, "individualism" is a genuine and strongly held value that motivates many whites who oppose attempts to improve the status of blacks by means of preferential treatment. On the central issues involving racial discrimination, the American consensus is powerfully against discrimination. The consensus breaks down, however, when compulsory integration is involved. **Many whites deeply resent efforts to force racial integration on them, not because they oppose racial equality, but because they feel it violates individual freedom.**

**Opposition to Government Intrusion:** **Many white Americans are negative toward government enforcement of equal treatment because of a more general rejection of government--especially federal--coercion.** Prejudice or bigotry of a traditional kind plays some role in producing opposition to race-related policies, especially for educated whites. But nonracial principles are even more important, which are somewhat different principles relevant to different policy goals.

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## e-5. Statistics: African Americans

### Statistics about Race and Affirmative Action

In many cases, where you stand on certain policy issues depends on what you know about factual information concerning those issues. How to perceive issues is often guided by what you know. Many ordinary Americans have little knowledge / information about race. Now consider the following survey results, which show huge misperceptions of the American public:

- The average American thinks America is 32 percent black, 21 percent Hispanic and 18 percent Jewish (Gallup and Newport, 1990);
- Over half of Americans think that the nation is at least 30% black, and a seventh of Americans think that the nation is at least half black (National Election Study, 1989).

Here are basic statistics about the life of African Americans

In the numbers such as

[Population](#) || [Education](#) || [Income](#) || [Unemployment](#) || [Welfare](#)

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### e-5.1. Statistics: African Americans: Population

<a href="#">Population</a>	<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">Income</a>	<a href="#">Unemployment</a>	<a href="#">Welfare</a>
<b>Black Population:</b>  According to the 2000 U.S. Census, of the total, 36.4 million, or <b>12.9</b> percent, reported Black or African American. This number includes 34.7 million people, or 12.3 percent, who reported only Black in addition to 1.8 million people, or 0.6 percent, who reported Black as well as one or more other races. Within this group, the most common racial combination was black and white, making up 45 percent of the pairings.				<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
				<a href="#">MAIN MENU</a> <a href="#">Statistics</a> <a href="#">Origins</a> <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a> <a href="#">Recent Development</a>

## e-5.2. Statistics: African Americans: Education

<a href="#">Population</a>	<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">Income</a>	<a href="#">Unemployment</a>	<a href="#">Welfare</a>
<p><b>Black Education:</b></p> <p>Blacks have made substantial progress in narrowing the educational attainment gap relative to Whites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1940, only 7.7 percent of Blacks 25 years old and over had completed high school, compared with 26.1 percent of Whites.</li> <li>• In 1965, the corresponding figures were 27.2 and 51.3 percent, respectively.</li> <li>• By 1993, 70.4 percent of Blacks 25 years old and over had completed high school, compared with 81.5 percent of Whites. Hence, the difference between the Black and White rates was smaller in 1993 than in the earlier years.</li> <li>• By 1993, there was no statistical difference in the proportions of Black men and White men who had completed high school: 85.0 and 86.0 percent, respectively.</li> <li>• Similar gains were made by young Black women but they remained different from White women in 1993, when 80.9 percent of Black women 25 to 29 years old had completed high school, compared with 88.5 percent of White women. In 1940, the proportions were 13.8 percent of Black and Other-races women and 43.4 percent of White women.</li> </ul> <p>Although the proportion of Blacks 25 years old and over who have completed college has increased since 1940, it is about one-half the proportion of their White counterparts.</p> <p>Among young adults 25 to 29 years old in 1993, Blacks were more than half as likely as Whites (13.2 percent compared with 24.7 percent) to have completed 4 or more years of college.</p> <p><i>Source:</i> the U.S. Census Bureau</p>				<p><b>Go To Survey</b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b>  <a href="#">Statistics</a>  <a href="#">Origins</a>  <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a>  <a href="#">Recent Development</a></p>

### e-5.3. Statistics: African Americans: Income

<a href="#">Population</a>	<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">Income</a>	<a href="#">Unemployment</a>	<a href="#">Welfare</a>																												
<b>Black Income:</b> <p>The U.S. Census Bureau released its 2001 income and poverty estimates, showing that Blacks, Asians and Pacific Islanders and Hispanics stayed at historic lows, while Whites and non-Hispanic Whites' poverty rates rose from 7.4 percent in the last year to 7.8 percent.</p> <p>The black-to-white ratio of median income has been stuck in the mid-50 to mid-60 percentage range for two decades, improvement apparently stalled. The median annual income for black males working full-time is 30 percent less than for white males.</p> <p>Wealth disparities are even more dramatic than income inferences, as shown in the chart below. Net worth measures a household's total assets and liabilities, including equity in home or automobile. The median net worth of black household is only 8 percent that of white households, and the average is 25 percent that of whites.</p> <table><tr><th colspan="4">Wealth and Race</th></tr><tr><th>Race</th><th>White</th><th>Black</th><th>Ratio B/W</th></tr><tr><td>Median Income</td><td>\$25,384</td><td>\$15,630</td><td>62%</td></tr><tr><td>Median Net Worth*</td><td>\$43,800</td><td>\$3,700</td><td>8%</td></tr><tr><td>Mean Net Worth</td><td>\$96,667</td><td>\$23,818</td><td>25%</td></tr><tr><td>Median Net Financial Assets**</td><td>\$6,999</td><td>\$0</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Mean Net Financial Assets</td><td>\$47,347</td><td>\$5,209</td><td>11%</td></tr></table> <p>* Net Worth = all assets, minus debts. **Net financial assets = all assets excluding equity in a home or vehicle, minus debts.</p>				Wealth and Race				Race	White	Black	Ratio B/W	Median Income	\$25,384	\$15,630	62%	Median Net Worth*	\$43,800	\$3,700	8%	Mean Net Worth	\$96,667	\$23,818	25%	Median Net Financial Assets**	\$6,999	\$0	-	Mean Net Financial Assets	\$47,347	\$5,209	11%	<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
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				<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Statistics</a> <a href="#">Origins</a> <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a> <a href="#">Recent Development</a>																												

### e-5.4. Statistics: African Americans: Unemployment

<a href="#">Population</a>	<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">Income</a>	<a href="#">Unemployment</a>	<a href="#">Welfare</a>																																	
<b>Black Unemployment Rate:</b>  Black Unemployment Rate doubles rate of whites. Blacks are losing their jobs twice as fast as whites.					<b>Go To Survey</b>																																
<table><tr><td></td><td>1994</td><td>1995</td><td>1996</td><td>1997</td><td>1998</td><td>1999</td><td>2000</td><td>2001</td><td>2002</td><td>2003</td></tr><tr><td>White</td><td>5.3%</td><td>4.9</td><td>4.7</td><td>4.2</td><td>3.9</td><td>3.7</td><td>3.5</td><td>4.2</td><td>5.1</td><td>5.2</td></tr><tr><td>Black</td><td>11.5%</td><td>10.4</td><td>10.5</td><td>10.0</td><td>8.9</td><td>8.0</td><td>7.6</td><td>8.6</td><td>10.2</td><td>10.8</td></tr></table> <p>Source:Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor</p> <p>Black people continue to have twice the unemployment rate of White people during the last decade, as shown in the Table above.</p> <p>Affirmative action has made unmistakable gains in employment, which have historically been integral elements in creating social progress. But in another respect, current affirmative action programs have little value for the black poor despite the roots of those of programs in the labor and community struggles of black working people.</p>							1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	White	5.3%	4.9	4.7	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.5	4.2	5.1	5.2	Black	11.5%	10.4	10.5	10.0	8.9	8.0	7.6	8.6	10.2
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003																											
White	5.3%	4.9	4.7	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.5	4.2	5.1	5.2																											
Black	11.5%	10.4	10.5	10.0	8.9	8.0	7.6	8.6	10.2	10.8																											
					<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Statistics</a> <a href="#">Origins</a> <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a> <a href="#">Recent Development</a>																																

### e-5.5. Statistics: African Americans: Welfare

<a href="#">Population</a>	<a href="#">Education</a>	<a href="#">Income</a>	<a href="#">Unemployment</a>	<a href="#">Welfare</a>										
<p><b>Black Welfare:</b></p> <p>Racial politics has so dominated welfare reform efforts that it is commonplace to observe that "welfare" has become a code word for race. When Americans discuss welfare, many have in mind the mythical Black "welfare queen" or profligate teenager who becomes pregnant at taxpayers' expense to fatten her welfare check.</p> <p>But the fact is: whites form the largest racial group on welfare; and teenagers form less than 8 percent of all welfare mothers.</p> <p>Families on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children)</p> <table><tr><th>White</th><th>Black</th><th>Hispanic</th><th>Asian</th><th>Other</th></tr><tr><td>38.8%</td><td>37.2%</td><td>17.8%</td><td>2.8%</td><td>3.4%</td></tr></table> <p>Blacks comprise only 12 percent of the nation, but, according to the above figures, they comprise 37.2 percent of the welfare rolls. This should not be surprising; in 1994, blacks had a poverty rate of 33 percent. We should not, of course, think it unusual to find poor people on welfare. Consequently, discussions of race and welfare must turn on different issues.</p> <p>The most prevalent question is why there are so many blacks in poverty. Liberals argue that it is the result of continuing racism and discrimination, especially at hiring time. Conservatives have argued a variety of other causes: moral shortcomings, poor work ethic, even intellectual inferiority.</p>				White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other	38.8%	37.2%	17.8%	2.8%	3.4%	<p><b>Go To Survey</b></p> <p><b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Statistics</a> <a href="#">Origins</a> <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a> <a href="#">Recent Development</a></p>
White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other										
38.8%	37.2%	17.8%	2.8%	3.4%										

## e-6. Origins of Affirmative Action

### Origin of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action *per se* was never a law, or even a coherently developed set of governmental policies designed to attack racism and discrimination.

It was instead a series of presidential executive orders and governmental programs regarding the awarding of federal contracts and licenses to minorities, as well as the enforcement of fair employment practices, with the goal of uprooting the practices of bigotry.

It can be said that, at their origins, Affirmative Action Programs were designed to provide some degree of *compensatory justice* to the victims of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and institutional racism.

Now consider the following information:

**Original Idea of Affirmative Action || Under Kennedy Presidency || Under Johnson Presidency || Under Nixon Presidency**

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### e-6.1. Origins of Affirmative Action: Original Idea of Affirmative Action

<a href="#">Initial Idea of Affirmative Action</a>	<a href="#">Under Kennedy Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Johnson Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Nixon Presidency</a>
<b>Initial Idea about Affirmative Action:</b>  When the affirmative action was begun in the early 1960s, the basic idea was that those making admission and hiring decisions should be required to demonstrate that African Americans were included in lists of candidates and given full consideration. Then, affirmative action has become to be identified in many quarters with giving preference to blacks when final decisions are made about admission or employment, particularly if they would otherwise be greatly underrepresented among the people finally selected. This practice could be justified on the ground that is different from the ideas behind the questions about principles in policy making.			<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<b>MAIN MENU</b> <a href="#">Statistics</a> <a href="#">Origins</a> <a href="#">The Supreme Court</a> <a href="#">Recent Development</a>



## e-6.2. Origins of Affirmative Action: Under Kennedy Presidency

<a href="#">Initial Idea of Affirmative Action</a>	<a href="#">Under Kennedy Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Johnson Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Nixon Presidency</a>
<p><b>Under Kennedy Presidency:</b></p> <p>In 1961, president Kennedy issued <i>Executive Order 10925</i> that directed federal contractors to take affirmative action to ensure nondiscrimination in hiring, promotions, and all other areas of private employment. This order did not refer to discrimination in public accommodations, housing, government employment, and private-sector employment in firms that did not have contracts with the federal government.</p>			<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><a href="#">Statistics</a></p> <p><a href="#">Origins</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Supreme Court</a></p> <p><a href="#">Recent Development</a></p>

### e-6.3. Origins of Affirmative Action: Under Johnson Presidency

<a href="#">Initial Idea of Affirmative Action</a>	<a href="#">Under Kennedy Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Johnson Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Nixon Presidency</a>
<p><b>Under Johnson Presidency:</b></p> <p><i>Executive Order 11246</i> (September 24, 1965) enforces affirmative action for the first time. Issued by President Johnson, the executive order requires government contractors to "take affirmative action" toward prospective minority employees in all aspects of hiring and employment. Contractors must take specific measures to ensure equality in hiring and must document these efforts. On Oct. 13, 1967, the order was amended to cover discrimination on the basis of gender.</p>			<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><a href="#">Statistics</a></p> <p><a href="#">Origins</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Supreme Court</a></p> <p><a href="#">Recent Development</a></p>

#### e-6.4. Origins of Affirmative Action: Under Nixon Presidency

<a href="#">Initial Idea of Affirmative Action</a>	<a href="#">Under Kennedy Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Johnson Presidency</a>	<a href="#">Under Nixon Presidency</a>
<p><b>Under Nixon Presidency:</b></p> <p>Nixon's endorsement of quotas came in the early 1970s when his administration approved <i>the Philadelphia Plan</i>, which involved the direct imposition of hiring goals in the construction trades.</p> <p>Under Nixon presidency, federal goals began to shift from equal opportunity as defined in the Civil Rights legislation to an emphasis on equal (or proportional) results.</p> <p>Under Nixon presidency, contractors were required to establish target "goals and timetables" for the hiring of "under-utilized" minority group members and women, and to show "good faith efforts" to meet these hiring goals and timetables; although not a rigid quota system, the "goals and timetables" requirement was a results-oriented approach to employment policy that its critics would charge operated, in practice, little differently than a quota system.</p>			<a href="#">Go To Survey</a>
			<p><b>MAIN MENU</b></p> <p><a href="#">Statistics</a></p> <p><a href="#">Origins</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Supreme Court</a></p> <p><a href="#">Recent Development</a></p>

## e-7. The Supreme Court's Decisions

### The Supreme Court's Decisions on Affirmative Action

The Supreme Court has been characterized as the eye of the storm of politics by modern scholars and was considered the least dangerous branch of government by the nation's founder. Contrary to the serene pictures of these descriptions, the Court has frequently interjected itself into highly charged political controversies, making important and final decisions on the several controversial policy issues.

The Supreme Court has pushed the country forward in a number of key areas: civil rights, a woman's right to choose, gay rights, the death penalty, rights of prisoners and suspected criminals, etc.

Now, check it out how the Court rules on the sub-issues of Affirmative Action such as:

[College Admission](#) || [Set-asides Programs](#) || [Hiring and Promotion in Employment](#)

[Go To Survey](#)

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## e-8. Recent Developments of Affirmative Action Program

### Recent Developments in Affirmative Action

Starting in the mid-1990s politicians and grassroots groups began to attack affirmative action at the state level, with some success.

- In 1996 California voters approved Proposition 209, an initiative that ended affirmative action throughout the state in public hiring, purchasing, and other government business.
- In 1998 Washington State voters passed Initiative 200, a measure that banned affirmative action in state and local government.
- In Michigan, the campaign to outlaw affirmative action started its petition drive January 12, 2004 and, if successful, will put the issue on the ballot for Michigan voters to decide November 2, 2004.
- In Colorado, lawmakers proposed a bill to eliminate or restrict using race to help decide college admissions.

Opponents of affirmative action vowed to continue fighting and noted the Court's opinion that "enshrining a permanent justification of racial preferences would offend the equal protection principle" of the Constitution.

Proponents of affirmative action believe that equal opportunity programs such as affirmative action are effective, fair, and necessary, particularly since racial discrimination still exists.

Now, consider the following information related to recent developments about affirmative action.

**Color-Blind Society vs. Affirmative Action Programs || Proposition 209 of California & Initiative 200 of Washington State || Michigan Civil Rights Initiative & Colorado Civil Rights Act || 2003 Supreme Court's Decisions**

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#### **Appendix 4. Online Deliberative Poll vs. Online Information-Board Poll**

There are similarities and differences between Online Deliberative Poll (ODP) and my design, Online Information-Board Poll (OIBP). Focusing on the key features of them, I argue that although ODP has many advantages compared to its origin, Face-to-face Deliberative Poll (FDP), it barely explain the mental mechanisms under which opinion change between pre- and post-deliberation occurs. Let me flesh out more of my arguments.

ODP addresses the very simple question; whether or not and to what extent post-deliberation opinion differs from pre-deliberation opinion. Indeed, all the reports from Iyengar and colleagues (Iyengar, Luskin, and Fishkin 2004a, 2004b; for FDP see also Fishkin and Luskin 2004) are based on simple documentation of the opinion change between pre- and post-deliberation. More precisely, they hypothesized and found that the opinion change stems from “learning effects” or “knowledge effects” by which they refer to the fact that those who learn something or increase their knowledge levels are more likely to change their opinion.

Granted, now let me discuss how my approach and question differ from those of ODP. First, knowledge measure can be a proxy as tapping how subjects deliberately process information. But it is at best an indirect measure of information seeking and processing based on factual knowledge items. Thus it cannot be better than a direct measure of information seeking.

Second, the assumption that increased knowledge results from deliberation during the information discussion and from attendance to the relevant information is plausible, but increased knowledge are determined by previous levels of political knowledge and learning/communication skills. This means that knowledge measure represents not only deliberative efforts but also other factors.

Second, ODP fails to estimate one's cognitive engagement in issue-relevant information. Each subject must be more or less involved in, interested in, motivated to, and capable of processing information. That is, each subject responds to the treatments in various ways, which in turn likely affect post-deliberation opinion. ODP as well as FDP, however, is not capable of measuring the variations in each subject's distinctive attitudes and behaviors in treating information.

Third, ODP like FDP does not allow subject to choose the information contents they want to study. Information is provided regardless of subject's necessity. This means that ODP cannot estimate which information is favored to needed by subjects, thus determines subject's opinion formation.

In contrast, the key advantage of my design, OIBP, is that it allows us to trace the behaviors of the subjects' information search. And in doing that, it can estimate the variations in each subject's response to the information in terms of time spent and amount and types of information accessed. This measure makes it possible to address the questions and test the hypotheses of how different attitudes and behaviors in information acquisition and processing affect policy preferences after processing information. In short, my design produces and tests the

hypotheses that are theoretically more interesting and important; the ways of impact of information processing on opinion formation (and change), not to mention the opinion change between pre- and post-information processing.

One shortfall of my design needs to be mentioned here. My design provides subjects less opportunity for deliberation because it has no options of group discussion and Q&A session with policy experts that OPD operated. This relative lack of deliberation opportunity might be disadvantage for the subjects to be more informed about the topic.



## Appendix 5. Coding Schemes for Experimental Data Analysis

For ***Party Identification***, the standard question as used in the National Election Studies was used. *Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent?* (1= Democrat, 3 = Independent, 5 = Republican).

***Political Ideology*** was measured, using the same question as used in the National Election Studies. *Generally speaking, would you consider yourself to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven't you thought about this?* (1 = Liberal, 3 = Moderate, 5 = Conservative).

***Knowledge*** consisted of seven items of general political knowledge ( $\alpha = 0.485$ ) and seven items of race-specific knowledge ( $\alpha = 0.556$ ). For general political knowledge, (1) *Which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington?* (2) *How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to override a presidential veto?* (3) *In general, thinking about the political parties in Washington, would you say Democrats are more conservative than Republicans, or Republicans are more conservative than Democrats?* (4) *Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?* (5) *How many members of the U.S. Supreme Court are there?* (6) (open-ended question) *What job or political office is now held by Dennis Hastert?* (7) (open-ended question) *What is the name of the president of Russia?*

Questions for race-specific knowledge were all open-ended. (1) *What percent of people in this country would you say are black?* (2) *What percent of all the poor people in this country would you say are black?* (3) *Of all the people arrested for violent crimes in this country last year, what percent do you think were black?* (4) *Of all the welfare recipients in this country last year, what percent do you think were black?* (5) *Of all the black males of working age in this country, what percent do you think are unemployed?* (6) *Of all the black population in this country, what percent do you think are educated with four years or more of college?* (7) *What percent of white citizens do you think support quotas in college education for blacks?* Right answers were coded as 1 and wrong as 0. This variable ranges from 4 to 14, with a mean of 8.407 and standard deviation of 2.157.

***Political Interest*** is a combined variable of four items ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ), running from 0 for the lowest political interest to 4 for the highest political interest with a mean of 2.572 and standard deviation of 0.856.

(1) *Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you have been/were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested?* (0 = Not much interest, 0.5 = Somewhat interested, 1 = Very much interested). (2) *Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal which party wins the presidential election, or that you can't care very much which party wins?* (0 = Do not care very much, 1 = Care a good deal). (3) *How much would you say that you personally cared about the way that the elections to the U.S. House of*

*Representatives came out? (0 = Not vary much, 1 = Pretty much). (4) Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say that you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all? (0 = Hardly at all, 0.33 = Only now and then, 0.67 = Some of the time, 1 = Most of the time).*

***Symbolic Racism*** is based on the racial resentment scale from National Election Studies (see Kinder and Sanders 1996). This variable consisted of six items ( $\alpha = 0.775$ ). Each item is 5-point scale from 1 for the lowest racial resentment to 5 for the highest racial resentment. The six items were additively scaled. Thus, the scores theoretically range from 6 to 30, but actually ranges from 7 to 28 with a mean of 17.917 and standard deviation of 4.278.

*Now I am going to present several statements. After each one, I would like you to tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly. (1) Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve (1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree somewhat, 5 = Agree strongly). (2) Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors (1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree somewhat, 5 = Agree strongly). (3) It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be*

*just as well off as whites* (1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree somewhat, 5 = Agree strongly). (4) *Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class* (1 = Agree strongly, 2 = Agree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree somewhat, 5 = Disagree strongly). (5) *Most blacks who receive money from welfare programs could get along without it if they tried* (1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree somewhat, 5 = Agree strongly). (6) *Government officials usually pay less attention to a request or complaint from a black person than from a white person* (1 = Agree strongly, 2 = Agree somewhat, 3 = Neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Disagree somewhat, 5 = Disagree strongly).

***Understandings of affirmative action*** either in liberal or conservative way were measured. The following question was used: What would you think is the best understanding of affirmative action programs? (1= Correction of the effects of past discrimination (15.3%); 2= Prohibition of future and current discrimination (25.3%); 3= Promotion of diversity or inclusion (27.6%); 4= Violation against the merit or desert principle (8.2%); 5= Reverse Discrimination against bystanders (11.8%); 6=Quota system (11.8%)). Then, the options of 1, 2 and 3 were recoded as liberal understanding of affirmative action and those of 4, 5, and 6 were recoded as conservative understanding of affirmative action.

***Log of Search Time*** is a natural log transformation of Search Time. It runs from .78 for the shortest time spent in information seeking to 3.43 for the longest

time spent in information seeking, with a mean of 2.264 and standard deviation of 0.664. The distribution of Log of Search Time is displayed in Figure 3.

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